

A
L E T T E R

FROM A

Russian Sea-Officer,

TO A

Person of Distinction at the COURT
OF

St. PETERSBURGH:

CONTAINING

HIS REMARKS upon Mr. *de l'Isle's* CHART
and MEMOIR, relative to the New Discoveries
Northward and Eastward from *Kamtschatka*.

Together with

SOME OBSERVATIONS on that LETTER.

By ARTHUR DOBBS, Esq;
GOVERNOR of NORTH-CAROLINA.

To which is added,

Mr. *de l'Isle's* Explanatory Memoir on his Chart
Published at PARIS, and now

Translated from the Original FRENCH.

L O N D O N :

Printed for A. LINDE, Bookseller to Her Royal Highness the
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Russian Sea-Officer

TO A

Person of Distinction at the Court

OF

S. PETERSBURG

CONTAINING

His Majesty's Order, M. S. No. 10,000,
and Memoirs, relative to the New Russian
Northwest and Southwest Coast.

Translated

Some Observations on the History of the

BY ARTHUR DOUGLAS

Governor of New Brunswick

TO THE

His Majesty's Secretary of State, and now
published by Order of the Privy Council

Transcribed from the Original Manuscript

L O N D O N

Printed by T. Cadell, Stationer, in Pall Mall, and
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A
L E T T E R

FROM A

Russian Sea-Officer,

TO A

Great Man at COURT.

My LORD,



OUR excellency is pleased to require my thoughts both on Mr. de l'Isle's new map of discoveries to the northward of the South-Sea, and his memoir annexed to it, in which that gentleman sets forth the motives for making that map, and chiefly consists in accounts of the navigation of our people and their discoveries, together with a supposed narrative of the *Spanish* Admiral *de Fonte*, said to have been sent in the year 1640, to make further discoveries in that same part

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of the globe. Besides the pleasure an affair of this nature must in itself give me, as relative to a science which for some years past has been my favourite study, your Excellency's commands carry with them such an indispensable weight, that I shall not plead insufficiency, notwithstanding there being several other officers of more experience, and equal diligence, who had no less than myself a share in the new discoveries made in the several voyages of the expedition, which we commonly call the *Kamtschatka* expedition; however, there is one particular consideration which may possibly intitle me to a preference herein, which is, that after my return from *America*, I was commissioned to compare the journals of several ships, both among themselves, and also with other accounts of the countries lying in the *South-Sea*, and, after examining them with the most accurate attention, to draw up a map, in which all the new discoveries were to be set down with the utmost exactness. And this map would have been published before now, had it not been delayed by the expectations of some accounts from the most inward parts of *Siberia*, to clear up certain doubts which arose in the very execution of that work.

I now come to the point, and begin with my observations on Mr. *de l'Isle's* Memoir, as from these it will easily appear what judgment ought to be formed of his map.

The *Sieur de l'Isle* begins with speaking of the treatises he published at *St. Petersburg*, for the advancement of astronomy, geography, and natural philosophy; he excuses his neglect to publish their continuation at the time appointed, by the voyage of his brother Mr. *de la Croyere* to *Kamtschatka*. He says, that being solicitous to collect fresh materials over and above those he had ready at hand, he had waited the return of his brother, in order
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to add the observations made in that last voyage to *Kamtschatka*, when the unexpected news of his death could not but occasion a new delay, 'till such time as he might get information of what his brother had done. These, according to Mr. *de l'Isle*'s own words, are the reasons whereby he has been induced to put off the continuation of the work he had begun; but, I apprehend, that they will appear very suspicious to your excellency, to whom the rules and institutes of the academy of *St. Petersburgh* are so well known, and who cannot but be informed of the discontents which Mr. *de l'Isle* gave to the directors of the academy. Here lies the true cause of his delay; besides, that any expectation from his brother was extremely ill grounded; I was myself an eye-witness of this gentleman's manner of living, and, after his death, how very few observations of his own were found among his papers, besides what he was assisted in by lieutenant *Kraslinkow*. It is to this ingenious pupil of Mr. *Terquarson*, formerly geographer to the navy, that those observations, which have been delivered in to the academy under the name of *la Croyere*, are to be rather ascribed, and without whose information little, very little indeed, could be expected from Mr. *de la Croyere*'s diligence.

The *Sieur de l'Isle* further pretends, that the materials, with which he would enrich his work, he had collected from other channels; nay, even from other countries: if so, why has he deprived us of them, as they, of right, properly belonged to us? Why was he not pleased, at least, before his departure, to acquaint the academy of his writings, that a copy of them might have been taken: so far from it (and I have not been wanting to make the best enquiry after it) there is not a single member of the academy, to whom he has vouchsafed to give a sight of the relation of the Admiral

de Fonte, which, he says, he received from *England* in the year 1739. This is a piece of jealousy, utterly unbecoming a man of letters, but is greatly aggravated by his being a member of a learned society, where all discoveries ought to be common.

Mr. *de l'Isle* would have the world believe, that it was by express order of our court, that he entered upon his researches in *Russia*. This is but a very slender circumstance, and I should not so much as have mentioned it, but that it tends to introduce a kind of confusion in the history of the geographical works in general, which relate to our territories; and particularly in the second *Kamt-schatka* enterprize. As to the former, no-body knows better than your Excellency, that *Peter the Great* referred to his senate the care, that plans and charts should be taken of the several parts of his vast dominions; and for this, the senate were to receive all the reports of the surveyors, who have been employed in this work ever since the year 1715.

Mr. *Kirilow*, who at that time worthily filled the office of first secretary in this commission, a man of great activity and zeal for his country, had began, before Mr. *de l'Isle* came to *Russia*, to collect the plans sent by the surveyors, and had them engraved under his immediate inspection; and out of these he compleated a general map of *Russia*, which was the first ever seen among us, and is very well known. Zealous, in the prosecution of *Peter the Great's* design, he, some time after, published a collection of particular maps, under the title of *Atlas of the Russian empire*; and these he likewise intended to augment, but he found himself under a necessity of discontinuing his scheme, being, after his promotion to the state council in the year 1734, employed in a commission which would admit of no avocations.

It is true, that Mr. *Kirilow*'s maps have in them many marks of the infancy of geography among us at that time, yet no other objections lay against them, than such as are common to all beginnings; and, besides the singularity of them, there are other very good reasons which maintain them in esteem. To these we were afterwards indebted for the resolution of the academy, to have new maps done; and with this view it was, that they engaged the *Sieur de l'Isle* to come to *Russia*, where he entered into a contract with them, not only as an astronomer, but likewise as a geographer; and who, immediately after his arrival, which was in the year 1726, was not by the court, but by the lord president, ordered to draw such maps as were specified to him, there being no necessity for the court to interpose in matters which were already in hand, and in their proper channel.

Here I could produce another passage in the memoir which I am now examining, as it has some affinity with the preceding; but as I am for following the *Sieur de l'Isle*, step by step, before I come to it several other particulars do occur, not less deserving of animadversion. “ Mr. *de l'Isle* “ promises to perform general and particular maps “ of *Russia*, far superior to those of the Academy; “ these, said he, speaking of his own, are taken “ from the observations which I have collected for “ that purpose;” whereas in truth he should have said, from those with which the academy furnished him, but of which he has been far from making the use for which they were given him: on this head I heard frequent complaints of Mr. *de l'Isle*'s dilatoriness of his work, and of his excuses; that he stood in need of some informations, which could not be settled, but by astronomical observations, without which it was an utter impossibility for him to form a general map, much less a com-

plete set of particular maps. I cannot help thinking, that it was wrong in him to aspire at a perfection, which was no more required of him, than it could be expected in such a first attempt ; yet, after all this scrupulous exactness of Mr. *de l'Isle*, and after the space of twelve years, so far was the work from being brought to any forwardness, that there were scarce the first outlines to be seen of it. Hereupon the academy, in the year 1740, very justly thought fit to employ others of their members, who exerted themselves with that assiduity, that, about the close of the third year, the maps which constitute the *Russian Atlas*, published in the year 1745, began to be engraven. Had these been taken only from the observations which were in Mr. *de l'Isle*'s keeping, yet is it highly probable that in a capital city, which had this design so much at heart, they could not have wanted opportunities of daily getting fresh informations, to have added them to the new plans expected from the different provinces ; tho' I am far from pretending, that this new *Russian Atlas* is so perfect as to preclude all future improvements of the geography of this kingdom, which would be contrary to the sentiments of the academy itself, who, upon the first appearance of this new *Atlas*, had come to a resolution of having amended, in a new set of more correct maps, what mistakes they had observed in these.

The illustrious person, who is at the head of the academy, (the Herman of *Little Russia*) shews himself no less attentive to promote this affair, than he is in all other points, which tend to the honour of that respectable society ; and from hence we cannot but hope a much greater success in this than in the first attempt ; and the rather, from the numerous supplies of many maps and geographical accounts, particularly of the *Asiatick Russia*, and the neighbouring countries, of which, before the re-
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turn of those academicians, who had been sent thither on purpose to procure better and more complete informations, we had but an imperfect knowledge.

Mr. *de l'Isle*, speaking of what *Peter the Great* had done to get intelligence of the northern limits of *Tartary*, and to find out whether they did not join with *America*, or at least were but at a small distance from it, says, " That *the Emperor*, for " this undertaking made choice of Mr. *Beerings*, " who, after receiving his order in the last years " of that great Emperor, on the 5th of *February*, " had received again the said order ratified by the " whole senate." Here is a mistake of the day, Mr. *Beerings* having set out on his first enterprize on the 5th of *February*, 1725. After that, Count *Apræin*, lord high Admiral, had given publick notice, that all sea-officers, who were inclined to go on that voyage, should repair to him. Upon which, Mr. *Beerings* having presented himself to the lord high Admiral, he received from him his instructions, which were, indeed, very short, but all written with the Emperor's own hand, a few days before his demise.

What I advance here, is no more than I have often heard from Mr. *Beerings* himself, nay, whose instructions I myself have seen, which were as follow :

First, To make the best of his way to *Kamtschatka*, and there to build two small vessels. *Secondly*, With these to reconnoitre the furthest northern part of the eastern coasts of *Siberia*, and to see whether in any part they joined with *America*. *Thirdly*, Afterwards to enquire on the *American* coasts after some *European* settlements and plantations, or to try whether he could not meet with a ship, to learn the names, and the bearings of the coasts. *Fourthly*, To draw up an exact account

of all his proceedings and observations, and then to return to *St. Petersburg*.

On the first of *March*, 1730, Mr. *Beerings* returned to *St. Petersburg*, bringing with him a complete narrative of his voyage, in which, he says, that after tracing the eastern coast of *Kamtschatka*, and of the land of *Tschutshi*, as far as the latitude of sixty-seven degrees and a half, he perceived the coast to stretch away to the west, in the manner as some of the inhabitants, who came aboard his ship, had before informed him; from whence he had concluded that there could be no continent, by which *Asia* and *America* were joined, and that, having thus executed his commission, he returned. This voyage lasted from the 14th of *July*, 1728, to the 2d of the following *September*. Since which, it has been found by a second expedition from *Kamtschatka*, that, although, as to the separation of the old and new world, Mr. *Beerings* is right, yet is he mistaken, when he says, that, at the elevation of sixty-seven degrees and a half, it appeared to him as if the coast fell off to the westward; there being at that latitude but one single promontory, which the *Anadorsk-Russians* call *Serzekamen*, and beyond which the coast continues its northern direction, as it does from *Kamtschatka*, till near the great *Tzskockkoi-Nos*, where it actually inclines westward, and where, at a place betwixt the 70th and 71st degree of latitude, it makes out the most northern extremity of *Asia*.

Another proof of the separation of the two continents, which Mr. *Beerings* is said to have given information of from *Kamtschatka*, is (according to *de l'Isle's* opinion) "That the inhabitants of the " said country have seen a vessel, which came from " the river *Lena*." It is true, indeed, that there is a tradition among the people of *Kamtschatka*, that some *Russians* were arrived among them, long before

before the conquest under *Wolodimer Atlaszow*; but, by what way, they knew nothing of. During the second *Kamtshatka* expedition, a member of the academy found among the records of the town of *Yakouzk*, that the *Russians* had come thither by sea, that they had sailed from thence beyond the great *Tzjukobkai-Nos*, and were afterwards cast away to the southward of the river *Anadir*; this event is said to have happened in the year 1648; and has been inserted since, with an abstract of this narrative and what relates to it, in the observations on the *Petersburgh* news-papers, published in the year 1742; from whence I conclude, that Mr. *Beerings* could have had no account at *Kamtshatka* of a vessel coming thither from the river *Lena*; especially as there is not the least intimation of any such thing in all the narrative of his voyage; so that this account of Mr. *de l'Isle's* is owing to his too precipitate judgment, who, no doubt, took it from the above mentioned observations on the *St. Petersburgh* news-papers; from which it was erroneously conjectured, that such an event hath been known to the inhabitants of *Kamtshatka*, and that they must have informed Mr. *Beerings* of it.

I shall carefully avoid any critical animadversions on Mr. *de l'Isle's* expressions, and confine my reflections to his meaning only: he talks of I know not what harbour at *Kamtshatka*, from whence Mr. *Beerings* set out on his voyage; whereas, he should have rather mentioned a river of that name, there being no harbour there properly so called; and in the second expedition, they could meet with no harbour at all, till they came to *Avatcha-bay*, which is about 60 sea-leagues southward of the river of *Kamtshatka*. “ After his return to *Kamtshatka-har-*
“ *bour* (these are Mr. *de l'Isle's* very words) Mr.
“ *Beerings* was told of a land to the eastward,
“ which in very clear weather was discernible:
“ that

“ that having refitted his vessels, which had been
 “ damaged by a storm, he attempted to go thi-
 “ ther ; but that this second trial was unsuccessful,
 “ for that after sailing about 40 leagues to the east
 “ without discovering any land, he met with a se-
 “ cond storm, and the wind being directly con-
 “ trary, drove him back to the harbour from
 “ whence he had set out :” Would not one, from
 this account, be inclined to think, that this second
 attempt of Mr. *Beerings* was immediately after
 the first? Yet, that was very far from being the
 case, for Mr. *Beerings*, before he went upon it,
 had wintered at *Kamtschatka*, not sailing from thence
 till the 5th of *June*, 1729, and then, without any
 intention of returning to the place of his departure,
 having sailed beyond the south point of *Kamtschatka*,
 he steered directly for the mouth of the river
Bolschaja-Reka, and from thence to *Ochozk*.

It may possibly appear strange to many, that Mr.
Beerings did not, in this voyage, fall in with the
 island where he was shipwrecked in his second ex-
 pedition ; but this may have been occasioned by
 the fogs, which in these seas are very frequent and
 thick : as to marks of a neighbouring country, of
 which, Mr. *de l'Isle* says, that captain *Beerings* him-
 self had told him, nothing is more certain than
 this ; the little attention that was given to it, will
 give me an opportunity of speaking again about it.
 It is certain likewise, that Mr. *Beerings*, and his Lieu-
 tenant Mr. *Tschirikow*, had in the years 1728 and
 1729, observed at *Kamtschatka* two eclipses of the
 moon, but, that by these observations, Mr. *de*
l'Isle was enabled to determine with precision the
 longitude of this most eastern part of *Asia*, and that
 the same had been confirmed in the second expedi-
 tion, by careful observations of the satellites of
Jupiter, is what I cannot well conceive. Mr. *de*
l'Isle himself intimates, that Messieurs *Beerings* and
Tschirikow

Tschirikow had carried no astronomical instruments with them. They observed both these eclipses by the help, not of pendulums, but of their watches, without being able to know whether they went right or wrong; which makes it almost incredible, that a determination formed from these two eclipses, should exactly agree with that deduced from the observation of *Jupiter's* satellites. And here I must take notice, that when *Mr. de l'Isle* is pleased to ascribe these observations of *Jupiter's* satellites to his dear brother, and some *Russians* skilled in those kinds of observations; all this must in justice be understood of Lieutenant *Krasnikow* alone, who by the senate's order accompanied them, and who in these matters was the most expert of them all.

And now we come to the circumstances of the second expedition, for which, as *Mr. de l'Isle* pretends, we are beholden to a map of his own, and that the whole was conducted according to a plan laid down by him, "In the year 1731, says he, I had the honour of laying before the *Empress Anna*, and the senate, this map of mine, in order to incite the *Russians* to prosecute their discoveries, wherein I also succeeded." Is it to time, or age, that we are to impute this error of *Mr. de l'Isle's*? Has he lost all remembrance of that order by which he was bound to draw the map he here speaks of? had this occurred to his thoughts, I believe, he would hardly have ventured to say, that he himself had laid his map before the *Empress*, and much less, that his view in it was to animate the *Russians* to new discoveries. At that time, I much conversed with *Mr. de l'Isle*, I was a witness of his geographical labours, as far as they related to new discoveries; I was also *Mr. Beerings's* interpreter in the conversations that passed between them, and I do confidently affirm, that, when *Mr. de l'Isle* began his second map, the orders for the second expedition

tion had already been given. Captain *Beerings*, sensible of the deficiency of his first discoveries, had offered himself to prosecute them, and so did his lieutenants, for which they were all rewarded by a higher rank. It is plain, therefore, that this work of Mr. *de l'Isle* must be ascribed to superior orders, and I remember perfectly well, that the *Empress Anna*, having directed her senate to give captain *Beerings* his directions and orders for his second voyage, it was his opinion, that it would be highly conducive to the better success of it, if the academy were to furnish him with proper informations, concerning the situation of the countries, and of the seas whither he was bound; upon which the senate gave her orders to the academy accordingly, and Mr. *de l'Isle* was appointed by the academy to form the map of which I now am speaking, together with the additional observations relating to it. No sooner were the map and the observations finished, than they were both delivered to the senate, by the academy; so that the real truth is, that so far was Mr. *de l'Isle* from inciting the *Russians* to fresh discoveries, or setting Mr. *Beerings's* second voyage on foot, that he did no more than work as he had been bid; and then, whether this performance of his did more good, or harm to the expedition, is another question which shall be discussed in the sequel.

However, the senate gave Mr. *Beerings* copies of the observations and of the map; of both which I also procured a copy, which now enables me to compare them with what Mr. *de l'Isle* says in his last treatise published at *Paris*.

He advances, " That he had struck out three
 " different ways for discovering what had hitherto
 " remained unknown; *First*, A direct course to
 " *Japan*, through the land of *Yesso*, or rather to
 " sail through those narrow seas, which separate it
 " from

“ from the *State's Island*, and the *Company's Land*,
 “ to cruize on discoveries north of the land of
 “ *Xesso*, and to endeavour to find out again the
 “ way that lies between this land, and the eastern
 “ coast of *Tartary*.”

This is what may be justly called a good advice after the thing is done. In the original of Mr. *de l'Isle's* observations, there is not a single word relating to any such enquires; all that Mr. *de l'Isle* does there, is to propose three different ways for finding out the neighbouring countries eastward of *Kamtchatka*, the two first must be allowed to agree pretty well with the second and third, exhibited in the *Paris* relation; wherein they are thus expressed.

First, “ If one should reach the most northern,
 “ and at the same time the most eastern parts of
 “ *Asia*, as far as Captain *Beerings* went (this, as
 “ I have already said, is a conditional proposition)
 “ one could not miss of falling in with *America*,
 “ whatever way one would chuse betwixt north-
 “ east and south-east, since the farthest distance
 “ would be about 600 leagues.” (This is a very
 considerable error in the computation of the distance of the land betwixt *Asia* and *America*, they being towards the north, separated only by a narrow streight, which sailing southward is found gradually to widen.)

Secondly, “ Without venturing so far, possibly,
 “ it were better, and more convenient, to set out
 “ from the eastern coast of *Kamtchatka*, and steer
 “ due east, in quest of that neighbouring country,
 “ of which Captain *Beerings*, had found some ap-
 “ pearances in his first voyage. As to the *third*
 “ way, Mr. *de l'Isle* conjectured, that the lands,
 “ of which Don *Juan de Gama* had sight, might
 “ possibly be discovered sooner, and with more
 “ certainty, by sailing in quest of them towards the
 “ south-east of *Kamtchatka*.”

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The bad success of this proposal was undoubtedly what brought him to see his mistake, and what may have put it into his mind, to alter it into a project of the way to *Japan*, and from the land of *Yesso*.

Nothing can be more foreign to the purpose, and at the same time more jejune, than the narrative Mr. *de l'Isle* has thought fit to give us of Mr. *Beerings* voyage itself. He makes him to have sailed in the year 1741, in quest of those countries towards the east of *Kamtshatka*, of which in his first voyage he had got some vestiges. "He did not proceed very far (saith he) for, being overtaken by a violent storm, and the weather being extremely dark, his vessel was rendered unable to keep the sea any longer, and was cast away on a desert island, in the latitude of 54 degrees, not far from the harbour of *Avatcha*, the place he had set out from."

Thus it seems, all that Mr. *Beerings* did, was nothing but just to shipwreck, and that immediately after he had left the harbour.

And here I am obliged to give to Mr. *de l'Isle's* dry and slender account a little more nourishment, by adding a relation of the voyage of Mr. *Beerings*, and the other officers in this expedition. I am the better able to do it, as I myself had a share in it, and can appeal to the journals and charts of each of the ships.

Mr. *Beerings*, the commanding Captain, Mr. *Spangenberg*, Captain, Mr. *Tschirikow*, and some other sea-officers, set out from *St. Petersburg*, in the spring, 1733. They staid at *Yakouzk* and *Ochozk* till the vessels were ready, which, at this last place, were building for them. When every thing was in readiness for Mr. *Spangenberg's* voyage, he, agreeably to the senate's orders, set out first, from *Ochozk*, in June 1738, with three ships

ships under his command ; to which was added a great covered chaloupe of twenty-four oars, which he got to be built at *Bolsherezkoi-Ostrog*, in *Kamt-schatka*, where he wintered. This sloop was designed for to enter within such narrow streights, between islands, as they might chance to meet with, where larger ships could not enter. In the Summer of 1739 he went to *Japan*. The long row of isles between *Japan* and *Kamt-schatka* served him for a guide. He landed in *Japan* in two places, where the inhabitants received him very civilly ; but he did not come (as *Mr. de l'Isle* wrongly asserts), to *Matsumai*, the chief place in the isle of *Yesso*, thinking that without going there he had executed his prescribed orders. He returned to *Ochozk*, and wintered at *Yakouzk*. When a particular account of this voyage came to *St. Petersburg*, upon a presumption, judging by the course he had steer'd, that he might have been deceived by the coast of *Corea*, he was ordered to make a second voyage for the confirmation of the first, which accordingly he undertook in 1741 and 1742 ; but his ship, built in haste of wood not dry enough, growing leaky, he was obliged to come back.

Mess. Beerings and *Tschirikow* sailed from *Ochozk* on *September* the fourth, 1740 ; they had both the same destination. The first was to follow the streamer of the other, that, in case of accident, they might be able to succour one another. They sailed directly by the point of *Kamt-schatka*, without entering the river *Bolschaja Reka*, as is usually done coming from *Ochozk*, and cast anchor in the port of *Avatcha*, or, as they called it, the port of *St. Peter and Paul*. During their wintering in that part, they got every thing in readiness for their chief expedition, which had *America* in view, as soon as the weather should permit. Under the uncertainty which road to take, captain *Beer-ings*

ings held a sea-council on the fourth of *May*, 1741. In this council it was determined to try, whether the land of *Don Juan de Gama* could be found out. It proved to be an unfortunate determination, and the cause of all the disasters that succeeded. We went to sea the fourth of *June*. Mr. *Beerings* had on board his ship, Mr. *Steller*, a physician, a man very well versed in natural history, who was sent by the academy. Mr. *de la Croyere* was with Mr. *Tschirikow*. But notwithstanding the orders directing Mess. *Beerings* and *Tschirikow* not to part from one another, they could not possibly avoid it, being parted, by storm and fogs, eight days after they set sail. Their design to look out for the supposed land of *Gama* had carried them directly towards south-east. They went in this direction to the 26th degree, without getting the least trace of that land.

They then turned towards north-east, and they both reached the coasts of *America*, but in different places, and without knowing any thing of one another. Mr. *Beerings*, and we who were with him, after a voyage of six weeks, discovered the first land, being, as we reckoned, 500 *Dutch* miles or leagues off *Avatcha*. We took in fresh water, and we had traces of inhabitants, but saw none. Having staid there three days in the road, Mr. *Beerings* consulted with his officers, and it was resolved to turn back. On the 21st of *July*, before sun-rising, we weighed anchor. We had only to follow the coast which turned westward, but the number of islands we met with, made the navigation very troublesome; and when we took to the sea, we were overtaken by storms and contrary winds, which occasioned daily retardations. In the mean time, in order to take in once more fresh water, we were obliged to return to the coast, which we had kept from as much as possible. We soon got sight of it, and

we were still about ten leagues off, when we cast anchor between the islands. The island whence we fetched the water from, we called *Sbumagin-Ostrow*. The water there appeared to be good, notwithstanding its being taken out of a lake, but was mixt with sea-water, which the flood, that sometimes overflowed the island, had brought there. Of this we felt very sad effects, viz. distempers, and the loss of many of our people who died of it.

During three or four days we endeavoured in vain to descry any of the natives, whose fires we saw by night along the coast. On the 4th of *September* these savages came of their own accord on board of our small vessels, and after having given us notice of their presence by great shoutings, they shewed us their *Calumets*, that is, their sticks with falcon's wings on their top. By the signs they made us, we understood that they invited us to come on shore, to supply us with provisions and fresh water. We took advantage of it, and some of our people ventured to follow them, but some misunderstanding soon arising, all commerce with them was broke off. Having, on the 6th of *September*, proceeded on our voyage with a tolerable good wind, we soon found, as we went on, our impediments encreased from the continued coast and the adjacent isles we met with. Mr. *Beerings*, in order to avoid them, turned more to the south, and, in effect, the sea proved for some days to be quite free; but our joy was of a short duration, for on the 24th of *September*, at the height of 51 degrees, we found again some coasts with many islands, when at the same time such a violent storm arose, which lasted seventeen days, that it drove us back eighty miles. An old pilot assured us, that in fifty years sea service, he had never met with such a storm. Well might therefore the name of

the *Pacifick Ocean* be spared ; or if it deserves to be so called towards the tropick, as it possibly may, sure it does not deserve that name in this place. The weather indeed grew calm again, but our provisions were considerably diminished, and of all our hands we had first, we had but one third part left us that remained in health after all these disasters. We had still half the way before us to reach the port of *Avatcha*, reckoning from the furthestmost part of our voyage eastward, so that several of us were of opinion to winter in some place in *America*, rather than to expose ourselves to still greater mischances than those we had before ; but they who were for trying their utmost to recover the harbour of *Avatcha*, and who judged that it would then be time enough to look out for some other place of safety, when all hopes were lost of bringing this to bear, carried it against the first opinion ; and thus the month of *October* was spent to as little purpose as the former. On the 30th of the said month we descried two islands, which appeared to be like to those which stretched themselves from the south foreland of *Kamtschatka* towards *Japan* ; upon this we stood to the northward, and having got to the height on the 4th of *November*, we found ourselves under the 56th degree ; at last, the 5th of *November* proved the fatal period of our voyage, for, as we were making sail westward, we struck upon a desert island, where we saw nothing but death before us, the ship was beat to pieces upon one of the sands with which the island was surrounded ; however, we got safe enough ashore, and with such things as we thought were indispensibly necessary to our subsistence, and moreover, by a particular mercy of providence, soon after our own landing, we had the pleasure to see the remainder of our ship drive ashore, which we carefully gathered together, in hopes of
being

being able, by the assistance of God, to make it the instrument of our removal from this dismal habitation.

The island, on which we were cast, had not so much as a tree growing on it, and we were obliged to build huts, and to make firing of the wood which the sea drove ashore from other places. This is the desert to which we gave the name of *Beerings*, from that of our leader, and where, from excess of grief, and that he could not recover *Kamtschatka*, he expired on the 8th of *December*; he refused to eat or drink, and would not suffer himself to be brought into one of our huts, so that in this condition, a man of his age, joined to the infirmities that naturally attend it, could not but sink under the weight of such a complication of distress. We young folks recovered our spirits, and took courage, resolved on preserving our lives to the utmost, and to use all possible means for getting clear of this unhappy confinement. Before our coming to the island, it had been only the resort of sea-animals for taking the air, copulation, and breeding their young ones. At first these creatures suffered us to come pretty near in sight of them, without being in the least disturbed; but after they had seen some of their species killed by the shot of our people, they made off at the first appearance of us.

We shot several of these animals, which served us for food and raiment, and the valuable beaver-skins, which we got by these means, made us some amends for our sufferings.

The spring coming on, we fell to the execution of the great project for our deliverance, and with the remains of the vessel made shift to build a large tight-decked sloop, fitted with sails and anchors, and proper tacklings, to bear the sea, in case it were not our misfortune to meet with very

bad weather. In this boat we committed ourselves to the sea the 17th of *August*, 1742.

From this narrative may be corrected the error of Mr. *de l'Isle*, who places *Beerings Island* in the 54th degree, and not far from the harbour of *Avatcha*, whereas its true situation is in the 56th degree, at sixty miles distance from *Avatcha*, and forty *Dutch* miles from the mouth of the river of *Kamtschatka*.

As to the voyage of Mr. *Tschirikow*, although he did not suffer so much from the sea and other difficulties one may meet with on such an expedition, it was nevertheless attended with much hardship, and especially from the tenderness of his heart, which his profession as a seaman was far from having hardened to insensibility. After his being separated from Mr. *Beerings*, steering to the north-east, on the 15th of *July*, he came in sight of a land, whose shore was surrounded with steep lofty rocks, with a deep sea beating against them; he prudently kept at some distance, and on the third day sent the master, *Abraham Dementiew*, with ten hands, to take a view of the country; but neither *Dementiew*, nor any of the people that went with him, were ever heard of again. This man deserved our tears; he was of good family, young, well made, a man of virtue and singular knowledge in his profession, and a zealous lover of his country. Six days after, Mr. *Tschirikow* sent the boatswain, *Sidor Sawelew*, with three men, but no more was heard of them than of the former. All this time a continual smoke was seen on the shore, and the second day after the boatswain's departure, two men in different canoes, or little boats, came off from the place where *Dementiew* and *Sawelew* had landed, and when they came within hearing, they cried out with all their force, *Agai! Agai!* and immediately made for the shore again. Mr.

Tschiri-

Tschirikow was at a loss what to make of it, but despairing of ever seeing his men again, and having no other boat to send ashore, he left that place on the 27th of *July*, determining to continue on the coast as long as he possibly could, and afterwards to return to *Kamtschatka*; therefore *Mr. de l'Isle* commits a mistake in saying, that during the whole month of *August*, *Mr. Tschirikow* had kept cruising in that part, waiting the return of his people; he kept continually within sight of land for above one hundred miles, amidst the difficulties of frequent contrary winds and fogs; once particularly he found himself in extreme danger, being got near the shore, on which he came to an anchor, but lost it; no less than twenty-one small leather boats, with a man in each of them, made towards him, but that was all, as he was not able to converse with them. The want of fresh water and the scurvy carried off many of his people; among these were the lieutenants *Lichatschew* and *Plautin*, two very useful persons, and expert seamen, and from whose longer life many more good services might have been expected.

Mr. Tschirikow himself, on the 20th of *September*, felt some symptoms of a disorder, but his prudent diet, and the land air, soon set him to rights again; with *Monsieur de la Croyere* it went otherwise, imagining himself to be well enough, nay, even almost to his dying moment. It was wondered, that the great quantity of brandy which he swallowed every day had such a good effect, but it was soon perceived, that all advantage he reaped from this inflammatory liquor, was to forget for some time his pain, while the liquor was working in his body. He died the 10th of *October*, just at his coming into the harbour of *Avatcha*; having dressed himself in order to go ashore, and after having given once more an extravagant

vent to his joy at his safe return ; however, one important service of his is not to be omitted, which was, that upon the *Americans* shewing themselves at some distance to Mr. *Tschirikow*, he assured him that they were very like the inhabitants of *Canada*, where, before his coming to *Russia*, he had served seventeen years in the *French* troops.

Mr. *de l'Isle* mentions another discovery made by the *Russians*, who, in the year 1731, ventured to take the same course which Mr. *Beerings* had taken two years before in his first voyage. Here it is to be observed, that in the year 1730, Mr. *Pawluski*, at that time Captain of foot, and one *Scheftakow*, chief of the *Cossacks* of *Takouzk*, were appointed to reduce the *Tschuktschi*, a wild refractory people, who had revolted against our court ; and in order to have in readiness all necessaries for the army's subsistence, Mr. *Pawluski* sent Mr. *Gwosdew* the surveyor, to find out those provisions, which were remaining of Mr. *Beerings* first expedition, with instructions to bring them to *Tschuktschi*, in the vessel left by Mr. *Beerings* at *Ochozk*.

Gwosdew acquitted himself perfectly well of his commission, bringing his vessel to *Serzecamén*, without the least mischance ; but here he neither found Mr. *Pawluski*, nor could get any tidings of him, which obliged him to put back for *Ochozk* ; but here, though he had no thought of making new discoveries, he was carried by the wind on the coast of *America*, opposite to the land of the *Tschuktschi*, and at no great distance from it. I never have heard that he got sight of any one of the natives of that country, which renders very doubtful that narrative of Mr. *de l'Isle*, about a conversation held between the captain and the *Americans*, and between people too, who could not understand one anothers language. But be this as it will, this fortuitous voyage confirmed what we
were

were informed of before, only from the relations of the *Tschuktschi*, viz. that the great continent of *America* reaches to within a small distance of them; and thus the conjecture which Mr. *de l'Isle* ascribes to Mr. *Buache*, proves to be well founded; and, though it was not till after a general knowledge of the structure of the globe, that he had supposed that the north parts of *Asia* must be joined to *America*, by a ridge of mountains and a shallow sea, I make no difficulty to add an opinion, which may corroborate what he has advanced; which is, that I am of opinion that formerly the land of *Tschuktschi*, and the part of *America* opposite to it, were joined, but separated by an inundation, a vulcano, or an earthquake, as has happened in other places; and thus the peopling of the vast *American* continent is more easily accounted for, than on any other hypothesis.

As to the discoveries made on the coasts of the *Frozen-sea*, Mr. *de l'Isle* is contented, with his very *French-fashioned* conciseness, to tell us, that he formed his map of these coasts from observations taken at sea, from *Archangel* to the river *Kolyma*; but would it not have been much more candid and honest to have owned, that he drew them from the new *Russian Atlas*? For had he known any thing farther, he would not, it seems, so far have deviated from the generous custom of the learned, to assign to its right owner what is not properly their own; and this act of literary justice would have been much to his credit here, on so fine an occasion. It is true, that the discoveries of this coast, or rather of the road thorough the *Frozen-sea*, as far as those places which are accessible, was a work of vast labour and time.

Two ships sent from *Archangel* to *Beresow*, and two more from *Beresow* to *Turuchanzk*, at length reached the place of their destination; but the other

two, which were fitted out at *Takouzk*, of which one was to go from the mouth of the river *Lena*, to the mouth of the river *Jenisei*, and the other from the *Lena*, eastward, to attempt a passage to *Kamtschatka*, had not the like success; the former not being able to prosecute its voyage further than a little beyond that part where the river *Taimura* runs into the sea. A ridge of islands, running north-westward from the coast, obstructed their passage, and the prodigious pieces of ice, that were immoveable, not permitting them to get to the end of these islands, all this labour came to nothing, and the vessel itself was lost. The experiment to be made with the other vessels, which were come from the *Ob* into the *Jenisei*, in order from thence to meet that vessel expected from the *Lena*, met with no better success. They were obliged to wait at the river *Piesida*: so that the coast betwixt the *Piesida*, and the *Taimura*, would have remained unknown, had they not been discovered by land. On the other hand, the vessel which was to sail from the *Lena* eastward, on a passage to *Kamtschatka*, perished among the ice, near the river *Indigirka*. From so many unfortunate voyages, it may well be concluded what account is to be made of the passage through the *Frozen-sea*, which the *English* and *Dutch* formerly attempted with so much zeal and eagerness; but unquestionably they would have given over any such thoughts, had they been acquainted with the insurmountable dangers and difficulties of this voyage; and after all, which of us are more likely to succeed in such an attempt, they, or we *Russians*, who are more inured to cold and fatigue than the former, and are able to bear the want of a thousand things, and who, though powerfully supported, yet failed in our enterprizes. To what purpose then were all these charges and labours of so many trials? Why, it is to find a shorter cut to the

the *Indies*, a considerable advantage I own, were one not obliged to go through a severe winter of three or four months by the way ; after all, the nearest way to the *East-Indies* is to be found only on our maps and globes.

Lastly, Mr. *de l'Isle* speaks of a large country, which he says was discovered in the year 1723, lying northward of the *Frozen-sea*, in the 75th degree of latitude ; but without giving us one word of where, or by whom it was discovered : it seems that he has borrowed this mistaken account from that of the voyages in the *Frozen-sea*, published in the observations on the *St. Petersburg* newspapers for the year 1742 ; which observations contain such accounts as were got from *Yakouzk* ; but what stress can be laid on them, as they consist only of reports of the meanest of people, some saying that they had discerned a country over-against the river *Colyma*, and others went so far as to affirm that they had been there, whilst others again said that the land lay opposite to the river *Jana*. In a word, they were for having it believed that those parts were full of large islands ; but when skilful persons came to be appointed to get certain intelligence of them, they met with insuperable obstacles : from whence I conclude the aforesaid reports to have been very precarious, although Mr. *de l'Isle* has unhappily given so far into them, as to talk with positiveness of those lands, and even to assign them a latitude ; an error which he would not have committed, could he have read the originals. I shall close the present with some thoughts on the supposed narrative of the *Spanish* Admiral *de Fonte*, which, being one of the fundamentals on which Mr. *de l'Isle*'s maps are built, deserves a more strict enquiry than the particulars we have hitherto considered of : a *Spanish* narrative, of which there is only an *English* translation, without being able to
come

come at any *Spanish* original, and without any information from history, that such an Admiral was on the voyage ascribed to him, or even so much as that ever such an Admiral was in being; such a relation, I say, is at first sight extremely suspicious.

However, let this be thought to amount to no more than a bare suspicion; yet, without dwelling any longer on those circumstances, I think, I am able to discover very manifest marks of falsity in the relation itself, by shewing some of its contents to contradict the most common and received truths, and proving others to shock all probability, and that throughout it is a very insufficient basis for a map, unsupported as it is of all other authority.

Frist, One would hardly think it possible, if we had not here an instance of it, that a *Spanish* Admiral should have reckoned by the years of King *Charles* of *England*'s reign, just in the manner as is used by the *English* in their publick transactions. Does not this favour a conjecture, that possibly some *Englishman*, under the borrowed name of a *Spanish* Admiral, had taken the liberty to introduce his own conceits into the world; or, supposing he had found the materials in some *Spanish* relation, that at least he dressed them up his own way?

Secondly, According to this narrative, Captain *Hudson* performed his voyage for the discovery of a northern passage in the first years of the reign of King *Charles*. But what an over-sight is here in a consummate sea-man and an Admiral? Was he unacquainted with the history of the maritime discoveries in his time? *Hudson* died in the year 1610, and it was the year 1625 when *Charles* the first began his reign. Let it not be objected here, that it is Captain *James*'s voyage, to which is to be referred what is said in the narrative of the years of K. *Charles*. For even this would not quite remove the difficulty, since Captain *James* did not perform his
voyage

voyage till the sixth year of the reign of that Prince.

Thirdly, And what becomes of the voyage said there to have been undertaken by the inhabitants of *Boston*, which no soul ever heard a word of? I have made it my business particularly to enquire, whether any mention was made of it in any collection of voyages, and particularly of the *English*, most of which we have in hand; but to no effect. Mr. *Arthur Dobbs*, whose zeal for the discovery of a north-west passage is very well known, is the first who has made any mention of that affair; his intention herein was to encourage his countrymen to perform that, which, according to the contents of the narrative in question, is not only not impossible, but even very easy. Here is a circumstance which very much encreases my suspicion; it is relating to what Mr. *Ellis* says, in his account of his voyage to *Hudson's-Bay*, p. 70: Besides, says he, that the *Boston* undertaking is not absolutely incredible; which words Mr. *de l'Isle* interprets, as if Mr. *Ellis* meant, that Admiral *de Fonte's* relation contained nothing in it which is not at least very probable; whereas there is not a word of this in his whole book. And when, p. 72. he mentions an instance of a voyage performed from *Boston* to *Hudson's-Bay*, yet he adds nothing of its being undertaken with the view of finding a passage, nor does he so much as know the time of this voyage; on which account he finds himself obliged to own, that this account cannot be made use of as a proof of the question.

Fourthly, Upon their arrival at *St. Helena*, the Admiral and the ships company provided themselves with rosin, which issues, in great quantities, out of the earth; chiefly to make use of, as a preservative against the scurvy and dropsy; against which distempers rosin is reckoned a sovereign speci-

specifick: this, indeed, is something of no small importance, and does great honour to the bishop of *Cloyne's* tar-water; that one would almost imagine the reason of its being inserted, was purely to convince unbelievers of the transcendent virtues of the bishop's medicament.

Fifthly, And what is to be thought of the geographical errors; such, for instance, as that of a *Cape Abel*, which he makes a harbour of, and placeth it upon the coast of *California*, in the 20th degree of north latitude, while it is known that *California* does not reach so far. It is not an easy matter, indeed, to perswade one's self that such descriptions were taken upon the spot.

Sixthly, Let us now follow captain *Bernardo*, one of the Admiral's fellow-adventurers; who, after traversing a large sea, called *Valasco*, fails to the height of 79 degrees north; one of his crew is carried, by the natives of the country, to *Davis's Streights*; there he sees how the junction is interrupted, and quite obstructed, by a chain of prodigious mountains, lying north and north-west; notwithstanding which, they shew him ice no less than 100 fathom deep in the sea, and which was to have been there ever since the creation; the land stretches away northward, and the ice remains upon the land. Are not these manifest contradictions, and at the same time sufficient warrants for the Admiral to say, that no passage had been found from north-west into the *South-Sea*? And yet others have been introduced, clearly to prove that there is such a passage.

Seventhly, But now comes the most improbable place of the whole narration: the Admiral, after passing through several seas, which all have a communication with one another, meets with an *English* ship, which was upon finding out this north-west passage; he goes up to her in one of his sailing vessels;

vessels; and could not the *Englishman* have taken the same course that the *Spaniard* had? No; but instead of that, he is contented to deliver up his charts and journals to the *Spaniard*, and at once, for what reason we are to seek, breaks off his voyage, and very friendly parts from the Admiral. Now let any one bestow the least reflection upon all this insipid stuff, and all the other incidents to be met with in this narrative, and then judge whether it be worthy of any credit, or calculated only for amusement. Mr. *de l'Isle*, carried away by his fiery impatience to come at this north-west passage, imagines the two ships to have met in a narrow strait joining to *Hudson's-Bay*; but was there ever such a strait found out thereabouts; although no small pains have been taken to find it? and on this very account it is, that Mr. *de l'Isle* has been led to say, that the Admiral's course ended in the bay of *Baffins*, which yet is as improbable as the rest, and contradicted by the very narrative itself; for it was at the bay of *Baffin*, where Captain *Bernardo's* sailor is said to have been carried, and where they shewed him nothing but a prodigious ridge of mountains, and heaps of ice: this part is by mistake called *Davis's-Straits*, but I don't know how it came about that Captain *Bernardo* found things there quite contrary to what the Admiral had found.

These observations I do think are sufficient to shew, that it is a vain and fruitless attempt to make use of the pretended account of Admiral *de Fonte*, for filling up the vast and hitherto unknown space betwixt *California* and *Kamtschatka*. And now from the premises, I am led plainly and impartially to deliver my opinion on Mr. *de l'Isle's* map, which, as may already be perceived, will not perfectly harmonize with the description he gives us of the coasts of *America*. As to the appellation of these coasts, I see no reason why he should not have made

made use of that given them by their first discoverers; such as Captain *Drake*, who named them *New Albion*: however, as it is not thoroughly proved that ever Capt. *Drake* was in those parts, those names at least should be used which we find in the old maps and globes; as, *Niewada*, *Sierra*, *Guiura*, and *Anian*, which are names of provinces and kingdoms, and certainly not without some derivation, and which, perhaps, a *Spaniard* may have given them in some narrative unknown to us; tho', for my part, I should rather have been inclined to have made use of the name of *New-Russia*, in imitation of other nations, who have called Countries *New-England*, *New-Spain*, *New-France*, *New-Holland*, &c. It may be said we are not in possession of them; but as to this, it is purely at our discretion, for, at least, it is certain, that these vast countries belong to no power able to dispute the possession with us.

How little acquainted Mr. *de l'Isle* is with our sea discoveries, must be manifest to every one from his marking but at one single place, betwixt the 235 and 240th degree of longitude, some coasts, for the discovery of which the publick is indebted to us: now, if he has done this only to find a more convenient place for Admiral *de Fonte's* *Archipelago* of *St. Lazare*, as it is called, it would have been much worse; but so far from admitting of this *Archipelagus*, it is rather the north-west and western bounds which must be carried farther to join them to that land, which was seen at 51 degrees; since there wanted but very little, but that this whole district had been discovered by one or other of our ships. It will not be amiss here to observe, that the coast of this latter country lying under the 51st degree, is in Mr. *de l'Isle's* map made four times longer than it should be. This land hath been seen, not only by Mr. *Tschirikow*,
but

but also by Mr. *Beerings*, as we likewise have formerly seen it.

This Mr. *de d'Isle* knew nothing of, as having no knowledge of Mr. *Beerings* voyage; yet does Mr. *de l'Isle* turn it to the praise of his brother, to shew that he has done all he could to immortalize his dear name: *A country*, these are his words while he is speaking of his brother Mr. *de l'Isle de la Croyere*, which was seen by Mr. *Tschirikow*, and by Mr. *de l'Isle de la Croyere*; again you find the way from *Kamtschatka* to *America* by Capt. *Tschirikow*, and Mr. *de l'Isle de la Croyere*. This might pass well enough, if Mr. *de la Croyere* had been any ways instrumental in finding that way; but having been no more than an idle spectator, what title has he to any mention in that affair? He must have been blind not to have seen the coasts, which were visible to every one else, and, not to speak of us officers in both ships, who, as such, had our share in the execution of the affair, I take liberty to affirm, that our common sailors deserve much more than Mr. *de la Croyere* to have their names perpetuated, as having been really useful and laborious hands, but that a list of their names would take up too much room in this short piece.

It has already been noticed, that Mr. *de l'Isle* has fallen into a mistake in his memoir, by placing *Beerings Island* in the latitude of 54 instead of 56 degrees, and this error is also brought into his map; the manner also of his placing the islands, which lye betwixt *Kamtschatka* and *Japan*, would deserve a remark, if I could not refer myself to the map of Capt. *Spangenberg*, the essential part of which may be seen in the last leaf of the *Russian Atlas*. A judicious connoisseur and judge of such naval experiments, will not hesitate to give the preference to the informations of this compleat and indefatigable

gable seaman, namely, Capt. *Spangenberg*, who made his voyage on purpose to take a particular view of the said islands; such a judge, I say, will always prefer this man's observations to those of other ships, who made theirs only by the way, and as it were accidentally.

Mr. *de l'Isle* is of another opinion; he is pleased to stick to the situation of the island *Yesso*, and the other islands discovered by the *Dutch* ships, called *the Castricom*. He contradicts our informations, and to invalidate them, maintains his pretended land of *Gama*, which he brings a little more to the south-west than in his map of 1732. This is being a man of learning with a witness, to endeavour to impose further on the world, rather than retract a former assertion. How much more becoming were it, to leave every one in the possession of what is his proper right, than to go about to bias the reader, and favour one to the prejudice of another.

I conclude with a general remark upon the part of *Siberia*, as it appears in Mr. *de l'Isle's* map. It is entirely taken from the *Russian Atlas*, and that without any amendment of the faults both of the engraver and writer. It would therefore be an egregious mistake to presume, that in *France* better and more exact maps should be made of our country than we ourselves are able to execute. Let us but exert ourselves in avoiding the imputation of slowness; it will be an addition to the glory of our illustrious *Empress*, and the whole nation; than which there cannot surely be a more prevalent motive to each true-born patriot heart. This I am confident would quickly be effected by the countenance of the most eminent personages in the nation; and I particularly flatter myself, that as your *Excellency* is pleased, in a distinguished manner, to interest yourself herein, it will prompt us
to

to retrieve our past remissness. It depends upon you to procure me the advantage of contributing to this work; and, if you will be pleased to invest me with that care, I shall undertake it with the utmost ardour and chearfulness.

I now submit these observations to your Excellency's superior judgment! My wish in this affair will not prove fruitless, if, agreeably to your views, I can be so happy as to be employed therein, and deserve your approbation: I shall always think it a great happiness to be permitted to call myself,

My Lord,

Your Excellency's, &c. &c.

N. N.

D

Observaⁿ

to retrieve our past remissions. It depends upon you to procure me the advantage of continuing to this work; and, if you will be pleased to invest me with that care, I shall undertake it with the utmost ardour and cheerfulness.

I now submit these observations to your Excellency's superior judgment. My wish in this affair will not prove fruitless, if, agreeably to your views, I am so to happy as to be employed there-in, and believe your approbation: I shall always think it a great happiness to be permitted to call myself,

Yr. Servant,

Thos. Estlin, Esq. Secy.

M. N.

Office.

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OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

RUSSIAN Discoveries, &c.

By GOVERNOR DOBBS.





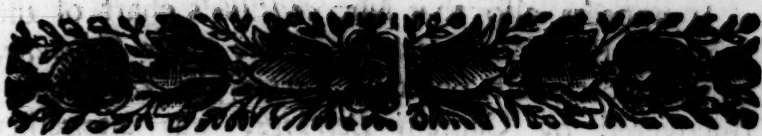
OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

RUSSIAN DICTIONARY

BY GOVERNOR DOBBS





Observations upon the Russian discoveries mentioned in a letter from a Russian gentleman, to a nobleman in St. Petersburg, with his remarks upon Mr. de l'Isle's chart and memoir, relative to the discoveries northward and eastward from Kamtschatka.

THE author in his remarks very justly observes, that Mr. *de l'Isle*, throughout his whole memoir, has taken the merit of the *Russian* discoveries, and improvement of their charts, in a great measure to himself, and his brother *de la Croyere*; although it appears evidently, that all, or most of the merit, is due to the *Russians*, who, with indefatigable labour and peril, travelled through these countries, and made these discoveries, as well by sea as by land, whilst he only collected his materials from their charts and memoirs. — For Mr. *de la Croyere* was of little more use, than a passenger would have been, on the last expedition towards *America* in *Tschirikow's* ship; — his chief merit seems to have been, his correct observation of the longitude at *Avatcha*, by the eclipses of the satellites of *Jupiter*; wherein a *Russian* officer of merit was also a principal observer. — In the last voyage he seems, by his account, not to have been capable of keeping a correct journal, having been sick, and had given himself up to drink large quantities of brandy, to keep up his spirits, which caused his death as he was landing at *Avatcha*.

It appears also that Mr. *de l'Isle's* chart of the coast of the *Frozen-sea*, from the river *Taimura*, to the north-east point of *Tartary*, at *Zersecamen*, discovered by Captain *Beerings*, was altogether taken from the charts by which the *Russian Atlas* was formed; and that the land he has marked in 75 degrees north of *Kolima*, is all traditional and imaginary, without any memoir to support it.

It is also evident that the discovery of the north-east coast, from *Kamtschatka* to 67 degrees north, was due to Captain *Beerings* in his first voyage in 1729; that the island, and land beyond it, in about 66 degrees, over-against *Tschutschi*, which he pretends to be part of *America*, was discovered by *Gwosdew* the surveyor, which Mr. *de l'Isle* has improved, by mentioning a conversation he had with a native, although they could not understand each other. It is also evident that the range of islands, from the south-cape of *Kamtschatka* to *Japan*, were discovered by Captain *Spangenberg*, or *Spanberg*, in which *de l'Isle* had no merit, unless his mentioning his sailing to *Matsmai*, the capital of *Jesso*, be a merit, and tracing it in his chart, without any journal to justify that account, which is contradicted by the author of these remarks.

As to the last two voyages in 1741, by the Captains *Beerings* and *Tschirikow*, in which Captain *Beerings* upon his return, was shipwrecked on a distant island, where he died; it is evident Mr. *de l'Isle* had never seen his journal, but supposed he had been shipwrecked soon after he left *Avatcha*, without making any discovery. So that the only journal he had to support his chart, was his brother *de la Croyere's*, which must have been very imperfect, as he had not sufficient health to attend to it, and was besotted with drinking brandy to keep up his spirits, and allay his pain, which caused his death, at his return to *Avatcha*. — With these materials,

terials, and a fictitious chart dressed up by him and his friend *Buache*, from an imperfect abstract of a journal, which at best appears doubtful, he has formed a chart of an extended country, from *California* to the north-east point of *Tartary*, leaving only a narrow streight betwixt them : — wherein, if *de Fonte's* abstract should hereafter appear to be true, he has altered his journal so far, as to lay down the river he entered, 10 degrees farther north than is mentioned in *de Fonte's* abstract ; and *Barnarda's* discovery, if any such was made by him, is laid down in an entirely different direction, from the account he had sent to *de Fonte*, tracing out a river south-west from the lake *Velasco*, when, if true, he had only sailed from that lake down a river 80 leagues, to 61 degrees, where it entered into the *Tartarian-sea*, so that his leaving *de Fonte* in 53 degrees, he must have gone northward down the river, to have entered the sea in 61 degrees. — But the fallacy of this chart having been detected in *London* by Mr. *Green*, he found himself under a necessity to correct it, and sent a chart to the Royal-Society, wherein he had cut out all these new discovered countries he had laid down in his chart, and brought the whole farther to the southward by 10 degrees, which he had cemented to the remainder of his *American* and *Asian* chart, by which means he brought *de Fonte's* streight *de Ronquillo*, from 72 degrees in *Baffin's-bay*, where he had placed it, to near 62 degrees near *Hudson's-bay* ; but he has not yet thought proper to publish any chart since, with that correction. — From this palpable deceit, it is evident he intended to have made use of that doubtful abstract, to have made out that there was a continent which extended from *California*, within a small distance of *Asia*, in 66 degrees, to prevent any farther attempts of a discovery of a passage to the western ocean from *Hudson's-bay*,

son's-bay, apprehending it could be no advantage to *France*, whilst the trade and country around *Hudson's-bay* was given up by treaty to *Britain*.

Having thus far taken notice of the remarks upon Mr. *de l'Isle's* chart and memoir, since the *Russian* gentleman takes great pains at the end of his remarks, to shew the spuriousness of Admiral *de Fonte's* abstract above mentioned, although I am far from affirming it to be genuine, yet, as I think it still remains doubtful, until further discoveries are made, to determine whether it be true or false; it may be proper in this place to take off some of the weight of this ingenious gentleman's objections against it. And first I must allow, if there should be found any truth in it, that it has been very ill translated, and incorrectly printed, and therefore can't support any chart to be made from it.

Although in several places it appears to be a very bad translation from the *Spanish*, by making an allowance for the incorrectness of the printing, which might partly be occasioned by not knowing the figures, from the manuscript having been thrown carelessly by, from the year 1640, the year of the revolution of *Portugal*, before which time the *Spanish Galleons* returned to *Lisbon*, when the ship which brought it, not knowing of the revolution, might have been seized by the *Portuguese*; and as they were then taken up in securing their country from *Spain*, they might not inspect, or regard such a manuscript, and consequently might throw it aside, where it might have lain with useless papers until near the time it was printed, when some curious person might have found it, and have sent it over to Mr. *Petiver*, who had a correspondence in *Portugal*, who had it translated, and published; by which many of the figures might have been mistaken, and probably several of the words

words or paragraphs; which may have been the reason that in many places the latitudes are not exact; yet for so much of the coast as is known, from *Lima* to *Salagua* and the isles of *Chamilly*, the latitudes are not much amiss.

As to the gentleman's objection of its mentioning the years of King *Charles's* reign, for the times of *Hudson's* and *James's* discoveries, the objection will also cut the other way; for though the *Spaniards* would not mention the years of an *English* King, in their accounts, yet, as the years mentioned are not true, either as to *Hudson's*, or *James's* voyages, it is much more likely that a *Spaniard* in *America* should make such a mistake, than an *Englishman*, of at least some learning, who would endeavour to deceive his own nation; for in that case, he ought to have been very exact, to make it pass upon his own countrymen.—But if an order had been sent from *Spain*, to acquaint the *Spaniards* at *Lima*, that the *English* were renewing their attempt to find a north-west passage, which had been before attempted by *Hudson* and *James*, and had imagined they were correct in naming the years of the reign, in which they had attempted it; or, if *de Fonte* had taken the account from the *English* pilot, who was on board of him, he might have put it in incorrectly in his abstract.

The next objection this gentleman makes, upon account of the rosin or tar taken in at *St. Helena*, with his wit upon the Bishop of *Cloyne*, may be easily shewn to have no weight; for there is a bitumenous tar, which either issues out of the earth, or rises with the water of a spring in that island, which is of a balsamick nature, as is mentioned; sometimes called by the *English* *Barbadoes* tar, which is used medicinally, and is often brought over to *Europe*; and if it was found in quantities, would answer as pitch for ships; so that there is

no inconsistency in that account. — The latitudes he mentions from thence along the coast to *Riokeja*, and from thence to *Salagua* and the isles of *Chamilli*, are near the truth ; but I must observe, that the names of the last two places were not inserted in any *English*, *Dutch*, or *French* charts, until after the printing this abstract, when the *Spanish* pilot's book of the *South-sea* was taken by the *English* privateers, in the *Acapulco* ship, in 1710 ; and, therefore, if the abstract had been forged by an *Englishman*, he would not have chosen *Spanish* names of places, then unknown in *England*. — His objection from its naming *Point* or *Cape-Abel*, in another paragraph *Port-Abel*, may be easily accounted for in an inaccurate translation, or error of the press ; and the latitude of the place being wrong laid down, by a mistaken figure, or the fault of the press,

The most suspicious account, I take to be that of Captain *Barnarda*, which he sent to *de Fonte* of his northern discoveries ; but they vary so much in the two different paragraphs, and are so concise, unintelligible, and indistinct, that we must believe, if the voyage be genuine, that the Captain was no judge of what he wrote ; unless that part of the abstract had been defaced by time, or accident. — But if the whole voyage was wrote with a design to impose upon the world, the person who wrote the abstract could answer no end by relating it, as it made against the opinion of a passage which he had a design to impose upon the publick.

As to his objections and remarks upon *de Fonte*'s meeting with the *Boston* ship, which he lays much weight upon, viz. that he had never heard of any such voyage made from *Boston*, in any collection of voyages extant ; that it was not likely that he would mention, that it was only a ship trading with the natives for furs, when he was sent to
seize

seize upon any ship attempting to discover a passage ; and his saying that the *Boston* ship left him, instead of pursuing the discovery, notwithstanding they found he had come there from *California* ; and that it was highly improbable that Capt. *Shapley* would have parted with his curious charts and journal ; I must observe, that not one of these make against the abstract's being a genuine and true account. — For, if by any accident, the *Boston* ship had been lost in her return, there could have been no account of such a voyage, as none could tell how far she had been, or where lost ; and, if such a voyage had been made, as it appears the ship had but ten mariners aboard, the presumption was that she had only gone to trade for furs, or to fish, as it was not fitted out to make a difficult discovery ; and, therefore, it was but just to represent them as being only traders, and not discoverers. But had the ship gone upon the discovery, it would not have been prudent to have owned it, or to have proceeded and followed *de Fonte*, who must have seized the ship, if it had gone to the lake his ship was in : nor does it appear that the ship quitted him and sailed back, but he left the ship at anchor, and returned in his boat. Besides, if the ship had gone to find the passage, it was sufficient for them to have known there was a passage through, by *de Fonte*'s having come from the *South-sea*, and, therefore, it had been right for them to return with so agreeable an account to *England* : and as to Captain *Shapley*'s selling him his chart and journal for 1000 crowns, that sum was a fortune to him in those days ; so they were well sold, when he could make them out again from the log-book ; so that this ingenious gentleman's remarks and objections are no proof of the abstract's being spurious, but still leaves it doubtful.

But,

But what seems to give this abstract an appearance of truth, notwithstanding its errors and incorrectness, is, that upon enquiring, we found there was a family at that time in *Boston* of the name of *Shapley*, and also one of the name of the owner *Gibbon*, who was then of the council of *New-England*; and that very near the place where the *Boston* ship was said to be met, by our last discoveries we found large openings and inlets; that in one of these the *Chesterfield* inlet, after proceeding into it 30 leagues westward from the entrance in the bay, it kept its breadth above 3 leagues wide, and seemed to increase, running to southward of the west, at 5 leagues distance, as far as they could see in a clear day. That a salt-water current came from the westward, at the rate of six miles an hour, for eight hours each tide; the tide from the bay, checked that current for two hours, and then for two hours more flowed gently to the westward, at the rate of one mile in an hour:—that it is also agreeable to *de Fuca*'s discovery, the Greek pilot in *Q. Elizabeth*'s reign, and also with the so much talked of streights of *Anian*, and coincides with the account given by Sir *James Lancaster*, in that remarkable postscript to his letter near the *Cape of Good-hope*, when he was in danger of being lost, and wrote home by another ship, viz. that the passage to the *South-sea* was in the latitude of 62 degrees and a half on the west side of *America*; besides, the northern *Indians*, who live on the north-west side of *Hudson's-bay*, have frequently been at the *Western-sea*; but, if the *American* continent stretched away north-westward, from *Cape-Blanco* in *California*, towards the north-east coast of *Asia*, in 66 degrees; the natives, in their way of travelling, could never have arrived at it, as it must have been at least 5 or 600 leagues distance from *Hudson's-bay*; these, with other concurring

ring circumstances, as the number of whales seen and caught on the north-west side of the bay, near these inlets, which don't come through *Hudson's-strait*, — there being no rivers found northward of 60 degrees, and only broken coasts without wood, makes it reasonable to believe the lands discovered by the *Russians* to be islands, some of which may be very large, interspersed in that north-western ocean. I must add to this, that by the latest and best accounts we can get from *Spain*, they allow that there was a family of *Fuente*, or *de Fonte*, who were employ'd by the *Spaniards* in the southern *American* seas, and that one of that name had been president of *Chili*, but don't mention the time, who was called *Merlo de Fuente*, that there is at present a nephew or great grandson of his, in the *Jesuit's-College* of *St. Pablo* in *Lima*, called father *Xavier de Merlo*, a very learned man.

Notwithstanding these circumstances, the whole must remain doubtful, until it is confirmed, or explained, by future discoveries; and, therefore, Mr. *de l'Isle* can't be justified in forming a chart from that abstract, and is evidently culpable, in falsifying that abstract, to make it answer his purpose, of extending the continent of *America*, near to the north-eastern promontory of *Asia*.

I shall now beg leave to make some short observations upon the concise account given by this ingenious *Russian* gentleman, of these *Russian* discoveries, beginning with the *Russian* discoveries of the *Frozen-coast* north of *Siberia*. — He has shewn the inextricable difficulties, and impracticability, of discovering a passage by sea, from the straits of *Wrygatz*, by the mouths of the rivers *Oby*, *Tenisea*, *Lena*, *Kolima*, and so on, to the north-eastern promontory of *Asia*, near *Tschutschki*; from the several fruitless attempts of the *Russians*, although undertaken with great judgment, and pursued with
equal

equal resolution, by vessels fitted out from the several rivers; one being ordered to sail eastward, and another westward, from each river, until they should meet each other; some being sent from *Archangel*, and the western rivers, to the *Oby*, which they accomplished; but those from *Oby* to *Jenisea*, and from that river to *Lena*, could not meet those which were sent westward to meet them, upon the account of ice, the vessels that went from *Lena* could not pass the point and isles near *Taimura*, for the quantity of fixed ice; so that the coast there could only be discovered by land, and the vessels that sailed from *Lena* and *Indigirka*, to meet each other, were lost in the ice; he says, that there had been a record found at *Jakoufk*, that a vessel had sailed from *Lena* to *Kolima*, and had from thence proceeded to the river *Anadir*, by the north-east promontory, in 71 degrees, and the point at *Tschutschi*, which was discovered by Captain *Beerings*; from these accounts he justly observes, that when these hardy *Russians*, inured to cold and ice, with all their advantages, could not sail along this coast, in the best season of the year, the ships of distant nations, must undergo such difficulties, as to make a voyage that way to *India* of no use, if it could be discovered further northward.

The discovery of an island and coast eastward of *Tschutschi*, was made by accident in the year 1730, after *Beerings* had the year before discovered the east coast of *Kamtschatka* to 67 degrees; at his return to *Ochotski-Oltrog*, having left his ship with provisions there, in 59 degrees, 22 minutes,—141 degrees east longitude from *Paris*, according to Mr. *de l'Isle's* memoir. Capt. *Pawtuski* was ordered upon an expedition by land to *Tschutschi*, and ordered Mr. *Gwosdew*, a surveyor, to bring to him there the provisions which Captain *Beerings* had left;

left; this he accomplished in his vessel, and went as far as *Zerfecamen*, but could not find *Parwtuski*: whilst he was cruizing there, he was carried by the winds to the eastward, within sight of an island, Mr. *de l'Isle* says, a man came off to him in a kind of *Greenland* boat, and conversed with him, and said he was an inhabitant of a great continent, where were many furs; he coasted it southward for two days, and was then forced to the westward by a storm, which drove him back to *Kamtschatka*. This account the *Russian* gentleman so far contradicts, as that he never heard that *Gwosdew* had seen any of the natives, which makes *de l'Isle's* account doubtful, as he could hold no discourse with a man he could not understand; but whether he did or not, he says, it confirmed the account given by the *Tschutshi*, that the continent of *America* was within a small distance of them; and from this slight account, he founds his opinion, that *Asia* and *America* had been joined, and separated by an inundation, volcano, or earthquake, in order to support an hypothesis he had formed, that *America* had been peopled from thence. — In this hypothesis and opinion, that this discovered coast is part of the *American* continent, and that *America* was peopled from the northern coast in 66 degrees latitude, I widely differ from him, and think it can't be supported, by that discovery and memoir. — For this coast being above 600 leagues from any known part of *America*, except the northern part of *Baffin's-bay*; it can't, without a further discovery, be considered otherwise than as an island of a considerable extent; for it can't be supposed that a vessel sailing cautiously along a coast, for only two days, and lying by at night, could discover above 60 leagues at the utmost, with an easy gale, after which he was forced back in a storm; and though Captain *Beerings* had symptoms of land to eastward
of

of *Kamtſchatka*, with ſhallow ſmooth water, yet it might be iſlands and banks, ſuch as theſe, which reached from the ſouthern promontory of *Kamtſchatka* to *Japan*; neither is it probable, that *Noah's* descendants ſhould migrate ſo far to the northward, and ſettle colonies from thence throughout *America*; it would have been equally eaſy to have done it from *Iceland* and *Greenland*. — But then from whence came all the ſerpents, reptiles, and animals, which are only found, and are natives in warm climates; I therefore, from this ſlight memoir, can't agree with him that the *American* continent is continued ſo near to the north-eaſt promontory of *Aſia*. — The next land diſcovered near to the *Aſiatick* coaſt was by Captain *Tſchirikow* in 51 degrees, 12 minutes lat. 12 degrees eaſtward from *Avatcha*, according to *de l'Iſle's* memoir, which I muſt follow when not contradicted by this ingenious gentleman, ſince he no where mentions the computed longitude of the places ſeen upon the laſt diſcovery. — Here *Tſchirikow* only ſaw a mountainous country, and entered a gulph or bay, from whence ſeveral people came off to him in a kind of *Greenland* boats, one in each boat; and, therefore, as no great coaſt was diſcovered, and only one place near it ſeen by Capt. *Beerings*, from whence he was forced 80 miles or leagues eaſterly, this can be no ſufficient reaſon to ſuppoſe it to be a continent, as it was at leaſt 240 leagues to ſouthward of the other land ſeen in 64 degrees, and about 170 leagues eaſtward of *Avatcha*, at 13 leagues to a degree of longitude in that latitude; and, therefore, no reaſon to think it part of *America* from theſe diſcoveries and memoirs.

The land which *Beerings* diſcovered after ſix weeks ſailing, by firſt ſailing ſouth-eaſt to 26 degrees, and thence north-eaſt, until he was about 500 *Dutch* miles or leagues eaſt from *Kamtſchatka*, wherein no mention is made of the latitude the land

land was in; as Captain *Tschirikow* made land the 26th of July new stile, and *Beerings* the 18th old stile, *Tschirikow* being only three days sooner than the other, in making land, and as it appears from *de l'Isle's* chart and memoir, that he did not sail so far to southward as the other, it must be supposed the land he saw was more easterly than what *Beerings* saw. This land was 50 degrees to eastward of the other mountainy land last mentioned, that he had seen upon his return, and in 55 degrees, 36 minutes, which, at about 12 leagues to a degree in that latitude, is at least 600 leagues to eastward of the other; it does not appear that he coasted the land above 100 miles westward of it, in expecting the boats and men he had lost, and, therefore, from his memoir, it does not appear that they were one continent; and by Capt. *Beerings's* journal, as mentioned by this *Russian* gentleman, it would seem probable that he had not been so far to the eastward as the other, by 270 leagues; so that there was space for a large sea betwixt those two places, since he computed it only 500 *Dutch* leagues from *Avatcha*, and the other was 770.—*Beerings* coasted for some days to westward, and after quitting the coast, by storms and contrary winds, was forced back again towards the same place, to take in fresh water at an island he called *Shumagan-Ostrog*.—This took him up to the 6th of *September*, he then sailed, and kept within sight of the coast for some days, where were many islands, which retarded their voyage, so they stood more southwardly to avoid the coast, and on the 24th saw land again, with many islands in 51 degrees, but by stormy weather for many days, they were forced 80 leagues to the eastward, when they apprehended they were still 250 leagues from *Avatcha*, being about half way from the first land they saw to the eastward; so

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that the land they last saw must have been 170 leagues eastward from *Avatcha*, and consequently very near the place *Tschirikow* was at. — So that from these several memoirs, it does not appear that the coast was continuous betwixt these two places they severally touched at in their voyages.

By Mr. *de l'Isle*'s memoir and chart, it does not appear to be a continuous coast from the easternmost coast *Tschirikow* saw, to *Cape-Blanco* in *California*, for he computed it was 14 degrees to the westward of *Cape-Blanco*, which is in 43 degrees latitude ; and the coast they were at was in 55 degrees, 30 minutes, which was 12 degrees, 30 minutes more to northward ; so that it was at least 220 leagues north-west from *Cape-Blanco*, and consequently might not have been a continued coast from thence, as there was space enough for a great influx of the ocean betwixt those places ; and although the nation they saw, might have been of *American* extraction, as they seemed to have something among them like to the calumet of peace used in *North-America*, yet they might be so, although they lived in islands which had a communication with the continent. — So that upon the whole, from these discoveries, it does not yet appear whether these lands seen, be part of the *American* continent, or made up of islands, since some of the natives seem to be like the *Greenlanders*, and some like the *Americans*, which must be determined by the next *Russian* discoveries. — They certainly deserve great praise in these they have already made ; and was I to advise, I should think it their most prudent and safest method to proceed along the coast discovered in 64 degrees north-east from *Kamtschatka*, and trace that country to south-eastward, and determine whether it be continuous, or made up of islands ; they would soon come into a warmer climate, and find out safe

safe harbours for their ships ; and at the same time find out, and increase a fur trade, to carry on to *China* from thence, and clear up these disputed points, which they may easily ascertain ; which would be of great service to the curious and learned world, as well as to merchants ; and they might probably find their people alive, who had been taken by the natives, and by them come to much greater knowledge of these countries.—And I should be extremely pleased to hear that the ingenious author of the remarks upon *de l'Isle's* memoirs and chart was to be employ'd in so great an undertaking, which, from his experience, I should hope he could accomplish, with honour to himself, and to the glory of the Empress of *Russia*, and her Empire.



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 great knowledge of the country.—And I should
 be extremely pleased to hear that the discovery of
 this of the new trade, as I have mentioned, and
 that was to be carried on to great advantage.
 ing, which I am sure I should find to be
 of great service, with regard to himself, and to
 the glory of the Empire of Great Britain.



A N
EXPLANATION
OF THE
M A P
OF THE
NEW DISCOVERIES
Northward of the
S O U T H - S E A.

By Mr. *De L'ISLE.*



THE NEW DISCOVERIES

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P R E F A C E.

FOURTEEN years ago I published at *Petersburgh* a first volume of memoirs relating to the history and improvement of astronomy, geography, and natural philosophy; since which time that work might have been considerably lengthened, had I not been more intent on the collection of new materials, than on the publication of those already in my hands. I was then, as always, after my arrival in *Russia*, deeply engaged, by order of that court, in getting together memoirs for a solid and complete system of the geography of that vast Empire, for the service of the nation. My Brother *de la Croyere*, who was permitted to accompany me into *Russia*, after visiting, pursuant to the orders he had obtained, the most northern parts of the government of *Archangel*, in order, by astronomical observations, the better to determine this

extremity of the Empire, he had also, some years since, undertaken, in the like manner, to travel over all the other parts of *Russia* and *Siberia*, to the furthest extremities of the east, and even to embark at the most eastward harbour of the *Kamt-schatka*, to go on a discovery of the countries lying betwixt *Asia* and *America*, northward of the *South-sea*. I waited till he had finished his voyage, and compleated all his observations, to add them to what I already had, and was continuing to collect from other hands, and even from foreign countries, when I received the afflictive account, that he died in his return from *America*, within sight of *Avatcha*, the very harbour from whence he had set out. To procure, examine, and digest all my brother's papers, took up farther time. These are real causes of my having delay'd to publish the sequel of my memoirs, till my arrival in *France*; having, in the first volume, printed at *Petersburgh*, promised to give a map of what new discoveries should be produced by my brother's voyage, and that of Captain *Beerings*.

On my return to *Paris*, my first business was to put in order all the informations I had been able to collect, relating on the vast extent of countries, till then unknown, lying betwixt *Asia* and *America*, northward of the *South-sea*; and, I had the satisfaction of seeing the map of them, which I presented to
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the academy at its publick meeting of the 8th of April, 1750, received with pleasure.

The utility of the discoveries for indicating both a north-east and north-west passage to the *South-sea*, which at present is made a point of such important concern, has excited a desire that this map was published, and, likewise, the memoir relating to it, in which I have given an account of the voyages of the *Russians*, in quest of the course to *America*, and this is what the reader has before him; I also conceived that the curious and intelligent would be agreeably entertained with the circumstantial narrative of the discoveries of Admiral *de Fonte* †, sent me from *England* in manuscript thirteen years ago, and of which I have made use for filling up the space betwixt the discoveries of the *Russians*, and others more recently made in *Hudson's-bay*, and of the most northern tracts of *America*, thro' which the passage to the *South-sea* is sought after.

To this general map I shall speedily add all the particular maps necessary for illustrating the descriptions, which at the same time I propose to give, of the most interesting parts of this general map, with a detail of the astronomical observations, and the last voyages made to those countries, which will exhibit

† *De Fonte* is a *Portuguese* name, and equal to *Fuente* in *Spanish*; but the manuscript, containing this Admiral's narrative, sent me from *London* in 1739, and the *English* books, which mention him, always having *de Fonte*, I thought it proper to conform to their orthography.

hibit the most solid foundations to the knowledge we now have of whatever lies northward of the *South-sea*.

With these I propose to begin the publication of all my geographical, astronomical, and physical collections ; and shall successively give new maps of *Russia*, both general and particular, with the necessary explanations, and the astronomical observations on which they are grounded ; whereby it will appear that the maps published at *Petersburgh*, tho' constructed on the memoirs which I had collected for that purpose, and though the plan of them, are deficient, both in the justness and accuracy which they ought to have.

In my memoir, which I read to the academy, it was said, that having jointly with Mr. *Buache* formed a map, which was wanting to Admiral *de Fonte's* narrative, we were not a little surprized at its correspondence with the *Russian* voyages ; and this has inclined me to think the more favourably of the truth of the narrative, though it has not acquired the degree of authenticity, which, in regard to its contents, and the circumstances there related, might be wished, especially as no *Spanish* original has yet been come at.


The opinion in *England* concerning this narrative seems to quadrate with mine, since *Ellis*, in his account,

account, vol. I. p. 98. says, that there is nothing in Admiral *de Fonte's* narrative but what is very credible. This it is which determined me to have the *English* manuscript correctly translated into *French*, and to publish the narrative just as I received it; which possibly may occasion the *Spanish* original to be brought to light, if any such there be, and to verify these discoveries, if fresh attempts should be made in those parts.

These memoirs shall be soon succeeded by my notes and observations on Admiral *de Fonte's* narrative, and the manner in which the countries discovered by him are represented in my map.



[62]



*New discoveries northward of the South-sea, read
at the Royal Academy of Sciences, on the 8th of
April, 1750, by Mr. de l'Isle, member of that
Academy.*

AMONG the unknown countries or seas, there are none, the discovery of which are more useful, than those to the northward of the *South-sea*. It is now above two centuries and a half that the *English* and *Dutch*, for the advantage of their rich commerce to the *East-Indies*, have been making prodigious efforts in quest of the shortest way thither; either north-eastward, along the northern coast of *Tartary*, or north-westward, by crossing the straits discovered to northward of *North-America*; but the little progress made in either of these courses is well known. It was with extreme difficulty, that the most daring and expert navigators, among the *English* and *Dutch*, could reach a little to the north east of *Nova-Zembla*; and the last voyages made to *Hudson's-bay* inform us, that the *English*, who persist in maintaining the possibility of sailing into the *South-sea*, through this bay, have not yet been able to hit upon the outlet leading to it; and could they find it, there would be still 500 leagues to reach the nearest known extremity of the *South-sea*, and without any certain knowledge whether this space be filled by lands or seas.

On the *Asiatick* side the distance betwixt the eastern coast of *Nova-Zembla*, and the most eastern extremity of the *Frozen-sea*, is not less than 700 leagues, and beyond this near 800 leagues to *Japan*;

pan; in fine, the unknown northern part of the *South-sea*, betwixt *Japan* and *California*, is above 1200 leagues in extent. What an immense space is here unknown on our globe, and in a part of such great concern! I am now to lay before the company the discovery of all the countries and seas contained in it, the knowledge of which I acquired during my long stay in *Russia*, and since my return into *France*. I shall not here enter into a detail of all the dispositions made by *Peter* the Great in *Russia*, for a complete geography of his Empire, before my arrival thither. Here it will be sufficient to relate what he particularly set on foot, for ascertaining the north-east limits of *Tartary*, and reconnoitring whether it were not contiguous to *America*, or very near it. For this expedition he pitch'd upon Mr. *Beerings*, a native of *Denmark*, and a consummate seaman: it was towards the close of the life of this great Emperor, at the end of *January*, 1725, that this officer received his instructions from him, which, on the 5th of *February*, eight days after the decease of *Peter* the Great, were in full Senate ratified by the Empress *Catharine*, who thought it incumbent on her to second the views of the late Emperor, her illustrious spouse.

Captain *Beerings* spent five years in his expedition, being obliged not only to go with all his men by land to the furthest eastward extremity of *Asia*; but likewise, to have carried thither the far greatest part of the materials for building two vessels, fit for going upon the discovery with which he had been charged. Mr. *Beerings* thought he had fulfilled his commission, when, after tracing the eastern coast of *Asia* from *Kamtschatka-harbour*, to the latitude of sixty-seven degrees and one third north-east, he perceived the sea free towards the north and east, and that the coast winded away north-westwards, and had further learned from the inhabitants,

tants, that between fifty and sixty years ago, a vessel had arrived at *Kamtschatka*, from the river *Lena*.

This expedition served to determine with greater punctuality than before, the situation and extent of the eastern coast of *Asia*, from the harbour of *Kamtschatka*, in the latitude of 56 degrees, to the place whither Captain *Beerings* had penetrated. All this officer had sight of in his sailing was only three small islands very near the coasts; but hearing at his return to the harbour of *Kamtschatka*, that to the eastward there was a country, which in calm clear weather was discernible, after repairing his ship, which had suffered by a storm, he endeavoured to go thither; but was unfortunate in this second attempt; for sailing eastward near 40 leagues, without perceiving any land, he again met with a violent storm at east-north-east, which being directly contrary, drove him back to the harbour from whence he set out; since which, he has not thought fit to go a second time in quest of this supposed country.

After Mr. *Beerings* was returned to *Petersburgh*, he told me with his own mouth what he has omitted in his account, viz. that, in his voyage along the eastern coast of *Asia*, betwixt the latitude of 50 and 60 degrees, he had all possible indications of a coast, or country, eastward; these are, 1st, That in the offing along those coasts there was but little depth of water, and the waves low, such as are usual in streights, or arms of the sea, very different from those mountainous ones which are met with on coasts exposed to a sea of great extent. 2^{dly}, That he saw broken pines, and other trees, driven along the sea by the easterly wind; whereas none grow in *Kamtschatka*. 3^{dly}, That the people of the country informed him, that an easterly wind brings the ice in two or three days; whereas,

whereas, the westerly wind does not bring them from the north-east coast of *Asia* under four or five days. 4^{thly}, That certain birds come regularly from the east every year in the same months, and, after continuing some months on the coast of *Asia*, return eastward with a like regularity.

Captain *Beerings*, and his Lieutenant likewise, took observations, at *Kamtschatka*, of two eclipses of the moon in the years 1728 and 1729, which helped me to state the longitude of that eastern extremity of *Asia*, with all the precision which the nature of these observations made by seamen, and with their own instruments, would admit of; but these first determinations have been since confirmed by observations, on *Jupiter's* satellites, taken in that place with the utmost accuracy by my brother and some *Russians*, conversant in these kinds of observations, and who were provided with the best of instruments.

After I had, near twenty years ago, got these first informations of the longitude of *Kamtschatka*, by means of Captain *Beerings's* map and journal, I made use of them in constructing the map now under view*, representing the eastern extremity of *Asia*, with the opposite coast of *North-America*, in order to shew at once what still remains for discovery between these two large parts of the world. This map, in 1731, I had the honour of presenting to the Empress *Ann* and the Senate, in order to animate the *Russians* to undertake these discoveries, and it took effect; this Princess ordering a second voyage to be made according to the plan which I had drawn up for it.

In this memoir, I pointed out three different courses to be steered, in order to discover what remained unknown. One of these courses was from the south of *Kamtschatka*, making directly for

* See the note at the end of this memoir.

for *Japan*, which was not to be done without crossing the land of *Yesso*, or rather sailing thro' the passages which separate it from *State's Island*, and the *Company's Land*, both discovered by the *Dutch* above a hundred years ago. This would lead to a discovery of what lay northward of the land of *Yesso*; the extent of which, on that side, was not yet known, no more than the passage betwixt that land and the coast of *East-Tartary*. The other course was to be directly eastward from *Kamtschatka*, to the coast of *America*, north of *California*. Lastly, The third view I proposed was to go in quest of those countries, of which Captain *Beerings* in his first voyage had such probable indications.

This expedition having been ordered according to my plan, Mr. *Beerings* was commissioned to go to the east of *Kamtschatka*, in quest of the lands of which in his first voyage he had the abovementioned indications: He set out in 1741, but did not go far; for meeting with a terrible storm in very dark weather, he was unable to keep the sea, and struck upon a desert island in the latitude of 54, at a small distance from *Avatcha* harbour, from which he had sailed. This was the period of the life and voyages of Capt. *Beerings*, he dying there through distress and vexation, together with most of his people. The few who survived returned with great difficulty to *Kamtschatka*, in a kind of a long-boat, which they had built out of the remains of their ship: this place was called *Beerings's Island*, and is to be seen in the second map which I now exhibit, and which represent all the discoveries I made since the finishing of my first map. The commander of the ship sent on the *Japan* discovery was one *Spanberg*, a *german*; he sailed from *Kamtschatka* harbour in 1739, with a fair wind, which in 16 days carried him near twenty
latitude-

degrees of latitude, southward, to betwixt the 36th and 37th degree along several islands; here he thought himself upon the coast of *Japan*, where he is said to have been well received; but he landed in *Japan* at betwixt 39 and 40 degrees latitude, which is the northern part of that country. In the prosecution of his voyage he went to *Matsmey*, the chief and one of the most southern places of the land of *Yesso*; but here Captain *Spanberg* did not go ashore. In the second map is delineated Captain *Spanberg's* course, from *Kamtschatka* to *Japan* and *Matsmey*.

As to the third and the principal course, which was eastward from *Kamtschatka* to *America*, this was committed to Captain *Alexis Tschirikow*, a *Russian*, who had been Captain *Beerings's* Lieutenant in his first voyage, and with him embarked my brother, Astronomer to this academy, both to assist him in the reckoning of the ship's way, and direction of the course, and to make exact astronomical observations in the places where they might land. They set sail on the 15th of *June* 1741 new style, from a harbour of *Kamtschatka*, called *Avatcha*, or *Port St. Peter and St. Paul*; the latitude of which my brother had, from observation, settled at 53 degrees, 1 minute, and its distance from the meridian of *Paris* has, by *Jupiter's Satellites*, been found to be above 156 degrees.

On the 26th of *July*, after 41 days sailing, in the track marked on the second map, they fell in with a country in the latitude of 55 degrees 36 minutes, which they took for the coast of *America*. They had sailed near 62 degrees in longitude, and consequently were at 280 degrees east distance from the meridian of *Paris*. *Cape Blanco*, the furthest extremity of *California*, to the north and west, is in the latitude of 43 degrees, and 232 from the

F
meridian

meridian of *Panis*, so that Captain *Tschirikow* and my brother were come within 14 degrees west, and 12 and half north, of *California*, whither none before them has been known to reach.

Captain *Tschirikow* having, as I have said, got sight of this land on the 26th of *July*, continued tacking off and on above a week, endeavouring to get nearer to the coast; but finding this impracticable with his ship, any nearer than a league's distance, he determined to send a boat with 10 men and a mate well armed; but upon their landing, the people on board lost sight of them, and they have never been heard of since, though Captain *Tschirikow* kept cruising along the coast all the month of *August*, in expectation of them, till the stormy season coming on, and their being no probability of their return, he thought it advisable to sail back to *Avatcha*. In his return he had sight for several days of those very distant countries which I have marked on my map*.

After a considerable progress in their return, on the 20th of *September* they came near a mountainous coast, very full of grass, but in which they could perceive no trees; the rocks under the water and along the shore would not allow them to land, but coming into a bay, they there saw some inhabitants, several of whom came to them, every one being singly in a canoe, not unlike those of the *Greenlanders* or the *Esquimaux*, however there was no understanding a word of what these people

* At the time of reading the preceding memoir, I had exhibited to publick view two large manuscript maps, which are those mentioned in his discoveries, one being a copy of the map which I had drawn at *Petersburgh*, 1731, on Captain *Bearings's* first voyage, and had the honour of presenting to the Empress *Ann* and the Senate, with a manuscript memoir, explaining its use and construction.

people said. The latitude of this place appeared from observations to be 51 degrees and a half, and its difference of longitude, from the harbour of *Avatcha*, whither they returned, was near 12 degrees. During this voyage of Captain *Tschirikow* and my brother, the greatest part of the ship's company had been carried off by the scurvy, and so far were they themselves from having escaped it, that my unfortunate brother, after 13 days illness, dyed of it on the 22d of *October*, in the arms of the sailors and soldiers, who were helping him into the boat to carry him ashore, and in sight of that harbour, from which he had set out on his expedition, about 4 months before. Captain *Tschirikow*, though far gone in that fatal disease, together with a few of his men, being able to be carried ashore, recovered. Such was the issue of the last voyage of the *Russians*, for finding out the way to *America*.

On the coast of the *Eastern-sea*, over-against *Kamtchatka*, is a place called *Okbota*, or *Okhotskoy-Ostrog*, in the latitude of 59 degrees, and 22 minutes, and near 141 degrees of longitude distant from the meridian of *Paris*. This is the place for taking shipping for *Kamtchatka* and the neighbouring countries; and Mr. *Beerings* having here left the ship in which he had made his first voyage, some *Russians* ventured to put to sea with it, in 1731, steering the same course as Mr. *Beerings* had done two years before, but with better success than him, having carried the discovery of a way to *America* farther than he, for reaching the point whither Captain *Beerings* had gone in his first voyage, and which had been his *ne plus ultra*, they stood directly eastward, where they met with an island, and afterwards a large country, which they had not been long in sight of, before a man in a little skiff, like those of the *Greenlanders*, came up to them.

They were very desirous of knowing what country it was he belonged to; but all they could gather from him was, that he lived in a very large continent, which abounded in furs. The *Russians* traced the coast of this continent two days in a south direction, without being able to land, when they met with such a storm as obliged them to bear away for the coast of *Kamtschatka*, returning afterwards to the place from whence they had set out.

To these discoveries of the *Russians* northward of the *South-sea*, I might add those which in the course of eight years they have made on the coast of the *Frozen-sea*, from *Archangel* to the river *Kovima*: but they not having been farther, I have only marked on my second map the situation of the coasts of the *Frozen-sea*, as far as the river *Kovima*, according to their observations, and the remainder of the coast from the best conjectures I could form from the course which other *Russians* had formerly steered along the coast as far as *Kamtschatka*; and likewise a large country discovered in 1723, to the northward of the *Frozen-sea*, at 75 degrees latitude.

When, as I have said, I was busied in *Russia* in the investigation of those northern countries, it was my happiness to be informed of the discoveries of Admiral *de Fonte*, in the *South-sea*, in his search after a north-west passage, and that by a manuscript extract of the voyage of that Admiral. Judging that I could not rightly use it, before I was acquainted with my brother's course, in order to compare them, I delayed it till my return into *France*, where I have had the advantage of Mr. *Buache's* lights, who has formed a map from Admiral *de Fonte's* narrative: that having none, we have compared it with my brother's course, and the other informations which I got in *Russia*, and found a surprizing conformity betwixt them.

Admiral

Admiral *Barthelemi de Fonte* was at that time Admiral of *New Spain*, and afterwards Prince of *Chili*, &c. He relates that the court of *Spain*, having been informed of the Voyages of the *English* into *Hudson's-bay*, to find out a passage to the north-west, he had received orders from the King of *Spain*, and likewise from the Viceroy of *New Spain* and *Peru*, to go on the same search through the *South-sea* with 4 Men of War; which accordingly put to Sea from the *Calao* of *Lima*, April 3, 1649; that near *Realejo*, on the coast of *Mexico*, they farther provided themselves with four long-boats, built expressly for sailing, &c. that having reached *Cape-blanco* (the then supposed extremity of *California*) he sailed 456 leagues in a north-west direction, till he arrived at a river which he called *Rio de los Reyes*, i. e. *King's river*; that in 260 leagues of this passage they had met with several streights, which serpentinizing, formed a cluster of islands, to which Admiral *de Fonte* gave the name of *St. Lazarus's Archipelago*. To avoid prolixity, I at present pass over the detail of the Admiral's narrative, the great lakes, islands and rivers, discovered in this voyage, and to which he gave names, they being sufficiently represented on the map, which I now offer to the academy. I shall only observe that this Admiral, and the Captains of the ships under him, having separated, and steering different courses, in order at the same time to discover the more countries, they might have carried their ships into some of the vast lakes marked on the map; and that the Admiral himself, having with his sailing-boats penetrated to one of the lakes contiguous to the *Bay of Baffins*, the *Cataracts* not permitting his ships to come hither, he there met with an *English* ship from *Boston*, &c. Lastly, that he had carried his discoveries

both by sea and land beyond the 80th degree, where he found mountains of ice of a stupendous height.

The lands and seas discovered by Admiral *de Fonte* fill up, as may be seen, the whole space which, after all the searches of the *Russians*, remained vacant for further discoveries, and terminate at the furthest known lands of *North America*, both towards *Hudson* and *Baffins-bays*, to the west of *Canada*, and the north of *New Mexico* and *California*, which throws so great a light on the discovery of a north-west passage to the *South-sea*, that I thought myself obliged to communicate them to the society, till I lay before it the grounds on which this map is formed, the detail of which must be reserved for our private meetings.

Yet I cannot forbear subjoining here a physical corollary, deducible from these discoveries, relating to the structure of our globe, at least as to its surface, by which Mr. *Buache*, who, from his accurate knowledge of the structure of all the other parts of the known world, had conjectured that *Asia* must be joined northward to *America*, by a chain of mountains and shallow seas, has had the pleasure to see his opinion confirmed by the discoveries of which I have here given a succinct relation.

The second manuscript map which I laid before the academy, was in all respects like the former, only with the advantage of the new discoveries made since 1731 being added to it by Mr. *Buache*, from memoirs which I had communicated to him, and that, as I noticed in my discourse, he had formed that part of this map which was wanting in Admiral *de Fonte*'s narrative.

Besides these, Mr. *Buache* had also made another small manuscript map, which was a reduction of the large map last mentioned. This small
map

map I presented to the president of the academy, whilst my memoir was reading; and Mr. *Buache* and I have since very willingly shewn it to all who have the improvement of geography so much at heart, as to desire a particular sight of it.

But this reduced map not being in a condition to be engraven, as wanting a more particular exhibition of *Asia* and *America*, I delayed publishing it till I had revised these two essential points. This engaged me in fresh disquisitions, especially with relation to *America*, in the most interesting places for *France*; but by application I accomplished it, and have been enabled to furnish Mr. *Buache* with new designs, which he has caused to be engraved, as may be seen in the map I now publish. This I thought a just regard for the publick obliged me to say, in excuse for the delay in publishing this map, and to shew the occasion of the difference betwixt the former and the present designs, and, likewise, to inform the publick of the share Mr. *Buache* had in the composition of this map.





A letter by Admiral Barthelemi de Fonte, then Admiral of New-Spain and Peru, at present Prince of Chili, in which he gives an account of the most important articles of his journal, from the Callao of Lima to Peru, and of his expedition for discovering whether there be any passage from the north-west of the Atlantic-Ocean to the South-Sea, and that of Great Tartary. Translated from the Spanish.

THE Viceroy of *New Spain* and *Peru* having received advice from the court of *Spain*, that the several attempts of the *English*, both in the reigns of Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James*, and, likewise, those by Captain *Hudson* and Capt. *James*, in the 2d, 3d, and 4th years of K. *Charles*, had been again renewed, in the 14th of the same Prince, being the year 1639, by some skilful navigators of *Boston* in *New England*; I Admiral *de Fonte* received orders from *Spain*, and the above mentioned Viceroy, to fit out four men of war, with which we put to sea from the *Callao* of *Lima*, on the 3d of *April*, 1640; I Admiral *Barthelemi de Fonte*, in the *Holy Ghost*; Vice-Admiral *Don Diego Penelossa*, in the *St. Lucia*; *Pedro Bernardo*, in the *Rosary*; and *Philip de Ronquillo*, in the King *Philip*.

On the 7th of *April*, at five in the evening, we arrived off *St. Helena*, which is 200 leagues north of *Guyaquil-bay*, and in two degrees south-latitude, where we anchored within the cape; and here every ship

ship provided itself with a large quantity of a bitumen commonly called tar, of a dark colour, with a greenish tinge, as an excellent remedy against the scurvy and dropsy. It is also used in paying ships bottoms, but we took it aboard as a medicament; it oozes out of the earth, and in these parts is found in great abundance.

On the 10th of *April* we passed the equinoctial, within sight of *Cape del Passao*, and on the 11th got beyond that of *St. Francis*, at 1 degree, 7 minutes, north-latitude; we anchored at the mouth of *St. Jago* river, and 80 leagues, N. N. W. and 25 E. by E. where casting our nets, we took a large quantity of very palatable fish. A party of each ship's company also went ashore, where they killed some wild goats and hogs, of which they saw great numbers; and besides, bought of the inhabitants, turkey cocks and hens, ducks, and most delicious fruits. This marketing was at a village two *Spanish* leagues, or six miles and a half, on the left-hand, from the mouth of the river *St. Jago*, which with small vessels is navigable to the distance of 14 *Spanish* leagues, about south-east from the sea, and almost half way to the large and opulent city of *Quito*, which is in 22 minutes south-latitude.

On the 16th of *April* we sailed from the river *St. Jago*, for the harbour of *Realejo*, 320 leagues, north-west by west, in about 11 degrees, 14 minutes, north-latitude, leaving *St. Michael's-hill* on our left, and *Cape Casamina* on our right. This is a very safe harbour, being sheltered towards the sea by the islands of *Ampallo* and *Mangreza*, and by three other islands, all well peopled and cultivated. *Realejo* is the place in *New Spain* where the large ships are built: it is but four miles by land from the lake *Nicaragua*, which discharges itself into the *North-sea*, near the island *del Grano*, i. e. of *Corn*, or *de la Perlas*, i. e. of *Pearls*. The neighbourhood

hood of *Realejo* abounds in hard wood, reddish cedar, and all kinds of ship timber. Here we took the opportunity of buying four boats, of about twelve tons, and thirty-two feet in the keel, prime sailors, being built for sailing and rowing.

On the 26th of *April* we sailed from *Realejo* for *Saragua*, or rather *Salagua*, passing among the isles and flats of *Chamilli*, by which name also this harbour is often called by the *Spaniards*. It lies in 17 degrees, 31 minutes, north-latitude, and 580 leagues north-west and by west from *Realejo*. At *Salagua*, and another town, called *Compostella*, near the former, we entered a master of a bark and his six men, who followed the pearl trade with the natives of *California*, and these catch them on a bank, at 19 degrees, north-latitude, beyond that of *St. John's*, which lies in 24. This pearl fishery bears 20 leagues north-north-east from *Cape St. Luke*, which is the south-eastermost part of *California*.

The master informed Admiral *de Fonte*, that 200 leagues to the northward of *Cape St. Luke*, a flood from the north met the south flood, and that he firmly believed *California* to be an island. Upon which, *Don Diego Peneloffa* (nephew to *Don Louis de Haro*, chief minister in *Spain*) a young nobleman of very extraordinary knowledge in cosmography, and not less skill in all the parts of navigation, undertook to discover whether *California* was an island or not, which before was an undetermined point, or rather, it was held to be a peninsula. Besides his own ship, he had with him the four sailing-boats, which had been bought at *Realejo*, and the pearl-dealers, who came on board of us at *Salagua*.

Admiral *de Fonte* left them to prosecute this design on the 10th of *May*, 1640, sailing within the islands of *Chamilli*, and after coming up with *Cape-Sable*, on the west-south-west coast of *California*, and in

20 degrees north latitude, and 160 leagues north, and by west from *Chamilli* islands, a fresh and settled gale sprung up at south-south-east, which, from the 26th of *May*, to the 14th of *June*, carried him to *Loys Reyes* river, in the latitude of 53 degrees, without having occasion to take in his top sails, in a north-north-west course of 866 leagues together, near 410 from *Port-sable* to *Cape Blanco*, and 456 from thence to *Rio de los Reys*; the weather likewise was fine during the whole passage; and near 260 leagues of it he sailed in the winding streights, formed by the islands of *St. Lazarus's Archipelago*, (as it was named by Admiral *de Fonte*) from its being discovered on the festival of that Saint; by his boats rowing a mile a head, to sound the depth of water, and observe the rocks and shallows.

On the 22d of *June* Admiral *de Fonte* sent an Officer to Captain *Pedro Bernardo*, with orders for him to sail up a fine river, very deep, and of an easy current. He entered it steering northward, afterwards north-west by north, and afterwards, as the river winded, north-west, which brought him into a lake with a multitude of islands in it, and a large and populous peninsula, the inhabitants of which he found to be of a very humane and amiable disposition. To this lake he gave the appellation of *Velasco*, in honour of a nobleman of that name, who was his patron: all along he had 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 fathom water; both the rivers and lakes afforded plenty of excellent salmon, and trouts, and white perches, some of which were two feet long. Here Captain *Bernardo* leaving his ship, took three *Indian* pinnaces, which in their tongue are called *Periaguas*, made of two large trees, and betwixt 50 and 60 feet in length; with these he sailed up the lake, first 140 leagues to the westward, and afterwards

afterwards 436 east-north-east, up to 77 degrees northern latitude.

After Admiral *de Fonte* had dispatched Captain *Bernardo* on discoveries to the north and east of the sea of *Tartary*, he himself sailed up a very spacious and navigable river, which, from its sightliness, he called *Rio de los reyes*, the channel at first bearing almost north-east, but in 60 leagues its direction frequently altered. At low water he alighted upon a navigable channel, four or five fathom deep; at the spring tides the water of both rivers is nearly of an equal depth, that of *Los reys*, at new and full moon, is two feet and half; a south-south-east moon brings on the flood, in *de Haro* river, where the water at the same time of the moon rises to 22 feet and an half; they had with them two Jesuits, who in their missions had been as far as the 66th degree of northern latitude, and had made very curious observations; one of these venerable persons attended Captain *Bernardo* in his discoveries.

Admiral *de Fonte* received a letter from Captain *Bernardo*, dated the 27th of *June*, 1640, with advice, that having left his ship in *Velasco* lake, betwixt the island of *Bernardo* and *Canibasset* peninsula, he was falling down a river which issued from that lake, and after a course of 80 leagues, in which are three cataracts, it runs into the sea of *Tartary*, at 61 degrees; that he was accompanied by a very pious and learned jesuit missionary, and had with him 36 *Indians*, in three of their periaguas, and 20 *Spanish* sailors; that the coast stretched away to the north-east; that they were in no danger of wanting provisions, the rivers offering them plenty of fish, and the country of venison and game of several kinds; besides a good store of bread, salt, oil and brandy, which they had brought along with them, and that no endeavours of

of his should be wanting to accomplish the discovery. The Admiral was now arrived at an *Indian* town named *Conasset*, on the south coast of the lake *Belle*, when he received this letter from Captain *Bernardo*. This is a very delightful place, and the two jesuit missionaries had continued here two years of their mission, to the great benefit of the inhabitants. The Admiral entered this lake with his two ships on the 22d of *June*, an hour before high water, in betwixt four or five fathom water; there was then no fall or cataract, and the general depth of lake *Belle* is six or seven fathom; there is a little water-fall till half flood, and half an hour before high water the flood begins slowly to set into *Belle* lake; the river water is fresh at *Arena* harbour, being 20 leagues from the mouth of the river *de los Reyes*.

This river and the lake abound in salmon, trouts, pikes, mullets and two other kinds of fish peculiar to these places, which are very large, and fine eating. Admiral *de Fonte* affirms the mullets of the river *de los Reyes* to exceed those of any other part of the world.

On the 1st of *July*, 1640, Admiral *de Fonte* leaving his ships in *Belle* lake in *Conasset* harbour, which was in every respect very convenient, being within a fine island, sailed up a river to which he gave the name of *Parmentiers*, in honour of *Parmentiers*, one of his fellow-adventurers, a person of singular merit, and who had drawn up an accurate description of this river and its neighbourhood. We have passed (it is still the Admiral who speaks) eight cataracts, which in all made 32 feet of perpendicular height, from the source of the river to its issue into lake *Belle*. The river runs into a large lake; I hope it will not be imputed to me as any great vanity, that I called it lake *de Fonte*, where we arrived the 6th of *July*; it is in length from east-north-east to west-north-west, 160 leagues, its depth

depth is generally from 20 to 30 fathom, and in some places even 60; no place has finer cod and ling, nor in greater plenty: in this lake are several large islands, and 10 smaller, which are so many thickets, being covered with shrubs and trees; but what is more surprizing, the moss grows to the height of 6 or 7 feet, and is in winter the chief sustenance of the deer, of which there is great numbers, and particularly of an animal called *Moose*, of which I cannot give a better idea, than by saying it is a kind of very large stag; they also produce cherries, strawberries, blackberries and gooseberries, store of wild fowl, such as woodcocks, partridges, &c. and sea-fowl, especially towards the south. In this lake is a large island well peopled, and besides its fertility, is of great advantage, being noted for the excellency of its timber, as oak, ash and elm, and chiefly firs, which are of an uncommon height and bigness.

On the 14th of July we sailed from the east-north-east point of the lake *de Fonte*, and passed a lake which I named *Estrecho de Ronquillo*, i. e. *Ronquillo Streights*, as to 34 leagues in length, it was but 2 or 3 in breadth; its depth was beyond what we expected, being 20, 23, and 26 fathom. We had the good fortune to be drove through this streight by a fresh gale within 10 hours, and in the time of a flood; the farther we went eastward, the country sensibly altered for the worse, as is seen in *North* and *South America*, from the 36th degree of latitude to the northern and southern extremities; the western part is preferable not only in fertility, but also for the temperature of the air, being at least warmer by 10 degrees here than farther to the east: this also was the observation made by the most judicious *Spanish* navigators, in the times of the emperors *Charles* the 5th and *Philip* the

the 2d, as may be seen in *Alvares, Acoſta, and Mariana, &c.*

On the 17th of *July* we came to an *Indian* town, the inhabitants of which told Mr. *Parmen-tiers*, that at a ſmall diſtance from us there was a large ſhip, in a place where no ſuch thing had ever been ſeen before ; upon which, we inſtantly made the beſt of our way for this ſhip ; but when we came to her, we found in her only a man pretty well in years, who was the Captain, and another in the prime of his youth, the owner and crew being gone a trading.

In the mechanical parts of the mathematicks I never have met with the maſter's equal ; my ſecond mate and my gunner were *Engliſhmen*, and thorough ſeamen ; they had both been made priſoners at *Campeachy*, as likewiſe had been the Captain's ſon ; they reported to me that the ſhip came from *Bof-ton*, the chief town of *New England*.

On the 30th of *July* the owner of the ſhip and all the ſhip's company came on board of me : the Captain of the ſhip, whoſe name was *Shapely*, informing me, that the owner of his ſhip was a very worthy man, and major-general of *Mattechuſets*, the greateſt colony in all *New England*. I treated him as a perſon to whom ſome regard was due ; ſignifying to him, that though my orders were to make prize of all whom I ſhould meet with, coming in ſearch of a north-weſt or weſt paſſage into the *South ſea*, I was willing to look upon them only as merchants trading with the natives, for ſkins and furs ; and he, as an acknowledgement of this indulgence, made me a preſent of proviſions, doubtleſs on a ſuppoſition that I wanted them ; which gratitude I returned with a diamond ring, but it was with great difficulty I could prevail on this gentleman to accept of it. Captain *Shapely* having many valuable charts and journals ; and ſenſible

sible their ship and liberty were in my power, made me an offer of them. They were an agreeable present, I own; but I insisted on my giving him 1000 peices of eight, as an equivalent. I likewise presented General *Seymour Gibbons* with a quarter cask of the best *Peru* wine, and gave 20 pieces of eight to each of his ten men, who seemed choice fellows; and so all terminated to our mutual satisfaction.

On the 6th of *August* we left the *English*, and on the 11th, after sailing 86 leagues, a fair wind and the current brought us to the first cataract of *Parmentiers* river; and on the 16th I had the satisfaction to be again with my ships, which I had left at *Conasset*, on the south coast of *Belle* lake, and to find all well. The people of *Conasset* had behaved exceeding well to our people, and Captain *Ronquillo* had not been wanting in suitable returns, and kept his men in excellent discipline.

On the 20th of *August* an *Indian* brought me a letter from Captain *Bernerdo*, of the 11th of *August*, informing me, that he was returned from his northern expedition, and could assure me, that there was no communication from the *Spanish* or *Atlantic* ocean, through *Davis's Streights*, the natives of the country having carried one of his sailors up to the bottom of that streight, where he saw it terminate in a fresh water lake, 30 miles in circumference, and in the 80th degree of north latitude; that towards the north were prodigious mountains, and to the north-west of the lake, masses of ice an hundred fathom high, which may have been formed there ever since the creation of the world; men with all their pride and conceit having but an imperfect knowledge of the works of God, especially towards the poles; adding, that from *Basset* island he had sailed north-east, east-north-east, and north-east and by east, up to the 79th degree

degree of latitude, where he observed the land to be covered with piles of ice, and to extend itself towards the north. Afterwards, a second letter came from Captain *Bernardo*, dated from *Menbauset*, acquainting me, that on the 29th of *August* he arrived at *Arena*, having sailed 20 leagues up the river *de los Reys*, where he waits my orders; Captain *Ronquillo* having, pursuant to my directions, salted up a large quantity of fish and venison, and got aboard 100 tons of maize, or *India corn*, I weighed from *Conasset* the 2d of *September*, 1640, bringing away several of the country people, who had desired to enter on board our ships, and on the 5th of the same month I anchored betwixt *Porto de la Arena* and *Menbauset*, in *los Reys* river; afterwards returning down this river, I found myself in the north-east part of the *South-sea*, from whence providence brought us safely to the port where we had set out on this discovery, having found that there is no such thing as a north-west passage into the *South-sea*.

The whole will more clearly appear in the map.

The end of Admiral de Fonte's letter.





*Extract from the register of the Royal Academy of
Sciences, of the 13th of January, 1751.*

BY order of the academy, we have examined three pieces, which Mr. *de l'Isle* proposes to publish under the Company's privilege, with his new map of the discoveries to the north and west of *America*.

The first of these pieces is a memoir, which Mr. *de l'Isle* has read at a publick meeting of the academy, setting forth the discoveries made by the *Russians* to the north and east of *Tartary*, and the north and west of *America*.

The second is a narrative of the voyage of Admiral *de Fuente*, made in 1640, by order of the court of *Spain*, for discovering the communication of the *South-sea* with the ocean through the north of *America*. This is a translation of an *English* manuscript, and its contents would be of very great importance, could its authenticity be made out.

The third piece is an advertisement, in which Mr. *de l'Isle* gives notice of his design to publish general and particular maps of *Russia*, together with the astronomical observations on which they are grounded; and which he proposes to render more exact and compleat, than those lately published
in

in *Russia* ; although formed upon a plan which he himself had laid down, and from memoirs which he himself had collected at *Petersburgh*.

All these several particulars appear to us of such concern to the publick, that we think the memoirs on them deserve to be printed.

Signed,

MARALDI DE MONTIGNY.

I certify this extract to be agreeable to its original, and to the judgment of the academy.

Grandjean de Fouchy, Secret. Perpt. de l'Acad.
Royale des Sciences.

F I N I S.

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